



No. CLV.]

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London: LONGMANS, GREEN, & CO., 39 Paternoster Row  
and New York



# ADVERSITY.

## THE SWEET MILK OF ADVERSITY;—PHILOSOPHY.

**CARLYLE** says:—*'Life is not given to us for the mere sake of living, but always with an ulterior aim.'*

**HUXLEY** asks:

**'WHO ARE THE REALLY GREAT AND SUCCESSFUL MEN OF THE WORLD?  
THOSE WHO TAKE HONOURS IN NATURE'S UNIVERSITY,  
Who learn the laws which govern men and things**



**AND OBEY THEM,**

are the really great and successful men in the world. Those who won't learn at all **ARE PLUCKED**, and then you can't come up again. **NATURE'S PLUCK** means **EXTERMINATION**! The simple meaning is, when ailing, pay no attention to the regulation of your diet, exercise, or occupation; attempt no conformity to the **Laws of Life**; or, when you have drawn an overdraft on the **Bank of Life**, &c., avoid the use of **ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT'** (you cannot over-rate its simple but great value), and you will be surprised to—

*'Learn of the body what a frail and fickle tenement it is,  
Which, like the brittle glass that measures time,  
Is often broke ere half its sands are run.'*

EVERY TRAVELLING TRUNK AND HOUSEHOLD OUGHT TO CONTAIN A BOTTLE OF

**ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT.'**

No matter where your feet may stray, Nor what you meet with on the way,  
You never will from Illness Halt, If fortified with ENO'S SALT.

**IMPORTANT TO ALL LEAVING HOME FOR A CHANGE.**—Don't go without a bottle of **ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT.'** It prevents any over-acid state of the blood. It should be kept in every bedroom, in readiness for any emergency. Be careful to avoid rash acidulated salines, and use **ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT'** to prevent the bile becoming too thick and impure, producing a gummy, viscous, clammy stickiness or adhesiveness in the mucous membrane of the intestinal canal, frequently the pivot of diarrhoea and disease. **ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT'** prevents and removes diarrhoea in the early stages. Without such a simple precaution the jeopardy of life is immensely increased. There is no doubt that where it has been taken in the earliest stages of a disease, it has in many instances prevented what would otherwise have been a serious illness.

**CENTRAL AFRICA—UP THE CONGO RIVER.**—'Having just returned from a Central African Expedition up the Congo River from Banana. I can testify to the grand effects of **ENO'S "FRUIT SALT."** It was used by the entire European portion of the escort, with the result that immediately after taking a fizing dose the blood cooled down and all signs of fever abated. *It, and it only,* served to keep us in better health than was enjoyed by any prior expedition. The last words used by my lamented friend Mr. Glave (since deceased) was, "Do not forget some of **ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT.'**" Our new expedition starts in July, and we shall certainly take out a larger quantity. This is entirely unsolicited, and you are welcome to use it in any way.  
'Liverpool, June 27, 1895.'

(Signed.)

'H. C., Captain and Commandant.'

**CAUTION.**—Examine each Bottle, and see that the Capsule is marked **ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT.'** Without it you have been imposed on by a worthless imitation. Prepared only at

**ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT' Works, London, S.E., by J. C. Eno's Patent.**

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# LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

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SEPTEMBER 1895.

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## *Old Mr. Tredgold.*<sup>1</sup>

A STORY OF TWO SISTERS.

BY MRS. OLIPHANT.

### CHAPTER XIII.

THERE was great consternation at Steephill when Somers came back—not, indeed, so cowed as when he left the Cliff, but still with the aspect more or less of a man who had been beaten and who was extremely surprised to find himself so. He came back, to make it more remarkable, while the diminished party were still at luncheon, and sat down humbly in the lowest place by the side of the governess to partake of the mutton and rice pudding which Lady Jane thought most appropriate when the family was alone. Algy was the only stranger left of all the large party which had dispersed that morning, the few remaining men having gone out to shoot; and to Algy, as an invalid, the roast mutton was of course quite appropriate.

‘What luck! without even your lunch!’ they cried out—Algy with a roar (the fellow was getting as strong as an elephant) of ridicule and delight.

‘As you see,’ said Sir Charles with a solemnity which he could not shake off. The very governess divined his meaning, and that sharp little Janey—the horrid little thing, a mite of fourteen.

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1895, by M. O. W. Oliphant.

'Oh, didn't Stella ask you to stay to lunch? Didn't they give you anything to eat after your walk?' that precocious critic cried. And Sir Charles felt with a sensation of hatred, wishing to kill them all, that his own aspect was enough to justify all their jokes. He was as serious as a mustard-pot; he could not conjure up a laugh on his face; he could not look careless and indifferent or say a light word. His tail was between his legs; he felt it, and he felt sure that everybody must see it, down to the little boys, who, with spoonfuls of rice suspended, stared at him with round blue eyes; and he dared not say, 'Confound the little beggars!' before Lady Jane.

'What is the matter?' she asked him, hurrying him after luncheon to her own room away from the mocking looks of the governess—she too mixing herself up with it!—and the gibes of Algy. 'For goodness' sake,' she cried, 'don't look as if you had been having a whipping, Charlie Somers! What has been done to you? Have you quarrelled with Stella on the way?'

Sir Charles walked to the window, pulling his moustache, and stood there looking out, turning his back on Lady Jane. A window is a great resource to a man in trouble. 'Old man turned me off,' he said.

'What? *What?* The old man turned you off? Oh!' cried Lady Jane in a tone of relief; 'so long as it was only the old man!'

Sir Charles stood by the window for some time longer, and then he turned back to the fire, near which Lady Jane had comfortably seated herself. She was much concerned about him, yet not so much concerned as to interfere with her own arrangements—her chair just at the right angle, her screen to preserve her from the glare. She kept opening and looking at the notes that lay on her table while she talked to him.

'Oh, old Tredgold,' she said. 'He was bound to object at first. About money, I suppose? That of course is the only thing he knows anything about. Did he ask you what you would settle upon her? You should have said boldly, "Somerton," and left him to find out the rest. But I don't suppose you had the sense to stop his mouth like that. You would go and enter into explanations.'

'Never got so far,' said Sir Charles. 'He that stopped my mouth. Game to lay down pound for pound with him, or else no go.'

'Pound for pound with him!' cried Lady Jane in consternation. She was so much startled that she pushed back her chair from her writing-table, and so came within the range of the fire

and disorganised all her arrangements. 'Now I think of it,' she said, '(pull that screen this way, Charlie) I have heard him say something like that. Pound for pound with him! Why, the old——' (she made a pause without putting in the word as so many people do) 'is a millionaire!'

Sir Charles, who was standing before the fire with his back to it, in the habitual attitude of Englishmen, pulled his moustache again and solemnly nodded his head.

'And who does he think,' cried Lady Jane, carried away by her feelings, 'that could do *that*—would ever go near him and his vulgar, common—— Oh, I beg your pardon, Charlie, I am sure!' she said.

'No pardon needed. Know what you mean,' Somers said with a wave of his hand.

'Of course,' said Lady Jane with emphasis, 'I don't mean the girls: or else you may be sure I never should have taken them out or had them here.' She made a little pause after this disclaimer, in the heat of which there was perhaps just a little doubt of her own motives, checked by the reflection that Katherine Tredgold at least was not vulgar, and might have been anybody's daughter. She went on again after a moment. 'But he is an old—— Oh! I would not pay the least attention to what he said; he was bound to say that sort of thing at first. Do you imagine for a moment that any man who could do *that* would please Stella? What kind of man could do that? Only perhaps an old horror like himself, whom a nice girl would never look at. Oh! I think I should be easy in my mind, Charlie, if I were you. It is impossible, you know! There's no such man, no such *young* man. Can you fancy Stella accepting an old fellow made of money? I don't believe in it for a moment,' said Lady Jane.

'Old fellows have got sons—sometimes,' said Sir Charles, 'City men, rolling in money, don't you know?'

'One knows all those sort of people,' said Lady Jane; 'you could count them on your fingers; and they go in for rank, &c., not for other millionaires. No, Charlie, I don't see any call you have to be so discouraged. Why did you come in looking such a whipped dog? It will be all over the island in no time and through the regiment, that you have been refused by Stella Tredgold. The father's nothing. The father was quite sure to refuse. Rather picturesque that about laying down pound for pound, isn't it? It makes one think of a great table groaning under heaps of gold.'

'Jove!' said Sir Charles. 'Old beggar said shillin' for shillin'. Had a heap of silver—got it out like a fool—didn't see what he was driving at—paid it out on the table.' He pulled his moustache to the very roots and uttered a short and cavernous laugh. 'Left it there, by Jove!—all my change,' he cried; 'not a blessed thruppenny to throw to the little girl at the gate.'

'Left it there?' said Lady Jane—'on the table?' Her gravity was overpowered by this detail. 'Upon my word, Charlie Somers, for all your big moustache and your six feet, and your experiences, I declare I don't think there ever was such a simpleton born.'

Somers bore her laughter very steadily. He was not unused to it. The things in which he showed himself a simpleton were in relation to the things in which he was prematurely wise as a hundred to three; but yet there were such things. And he was free to acknowledge that leaving his seventeen shillings spread out on the millionaire's table, or even taking the millionaire's challenge *au pied de la lettre*, was the act of a simpleton. He stood tranquilly with his back to the fire till Lady Jane had got her laugh out. Then she resumed with a sort of apology:

'It was too much for me, Charlie. I could not help laughing. What will become of all that money, I wonder? Will he keep it and put it to interest? I should like to have seen him after you were gone. I should like to have seen him afterwards, when Stella had her knife at his throat, asking him what he meant by it. You may trust to Stella, my dear boy. She will soon bring her father to reason. He may be all sorts of queer things to you, but he can't stand against her. She can twist him round her little finger. If it had been Katherine I should not have been so confident. But Stella—he never has refused anything to Stella since ever she was born.'

'Think so, really?' said Somers through his moustache. He was beginning to revive a little again: but yet the impression of old Tredgold's chuckling laugh and his contemptuous certainty was not to be got over lightly. The gloom of the rejected was still over him.

'Yes, I think so,' said Lady Jane. 'Don't, for Heaven's sake, go on in that hang-dog way. There's nothing happened but what was to be expected. Of course, the old curmudgeon would make an attempt to guard his money-bags. I wish I were as sure of a company for Jack as I am of Stella's power to do anything she likes with her father. But if you go down in this way at the first touch—'

'No intention of going down,' said Sir Charles, piqued. 'Marry her to-morrow—take her out to India—then see what old beggar says.'

'That, indeed,' cried Lady Jane—'that would be a fine revenge on him! Don't propose it to Stella if you don't want her to accept, for she would think it the finest fun in the world.'

'By George!' Somers said, and a smile began to lift up the corners of his moustache.

'That would bring him to his senses, indeed,' Lady Jane said reflectively; 'but it would be rather cruel, Charlie. After all, he is an old man. Not a very venerable old man, perhaps; not what you would call a lovely old age, is it? but still—— Oh, I think it would be cruel. You need not go so far as that. But we shall soon hear what Stella says.'

And it very soon was known what Stella said. Stella wrote in a whirlwind of passion, finding nothing too bad to say of papa. An old bull, an old pig, were the sweetest of the similes she used. She believed that he wanted to kill her, to drag her by the hair of her head, to shut her up in a dungeon or a back kitchen or something. She thought he must have been changed in his sleep, for he was not in the very least like her own old nice papa, and Kate thought so too. Kate could not understand it any more than she could. But one thing was certain—that, let papa say what he would or do what he would, she (Stella) never would give in. She would be true, whatever happened. And if she were locked up anywhere she would trust in her Charlie to get her out. All her trust was in her Charlie, she declared. She had got his money, his poor dear bright shillings, of which papa had robbed him, and put them in a silk bag, which she always meant to preserve and carry about with her. She called it Charlie's fortune. Poor dear, dear Charlie; he had left it all for her. She knew it was for her, and she would never part with it, never! This whirlwind of a letter amused Charlie very much; he did not mind letting his friends read it. They all laughed over it, and declared that she was a little brick, and that he must certainly stick to her whatever happened. The old fellow was sure to come round, they all said; no old father could ever stand out against a girl like that. She had him on toast, everybody knew.

These were the encouraging suggestions addressed to Sir Charles by his most intimate friends, who encouraged him still more by their narratives of how Lottie Seton tossed her head and declared that Charlie Somers had been waiting all along for some

rich girl to drop into his mouth. He had always had an *arrière pensée*, she cried (whatever that might be), and had never been at all amusin' at the best of times. He was very amusin' now, however, with Stella's letter in his pocket and this absorbing question to discuss. The whole regiment addressed itself with all the brain it possessed to the consideration of the subject, which, of course, was so much the more urgent in consequence of the orders under which it lay. To go or not to go to India, that was the rub, as Charlie had said. Stella only complicated the question, which had been under discussion before. He did not want to go; but then, on the other hand, if he remained at home, his creditors would be rampant and he would be within their reach, which would not be the case if he went to India. And India meant double pay. And if it could be secured that Stella's father should send an expedition after them to bring them back within a year, then going to India with Stella as a companion would be the best fun in the world. To go for a year was one thing, to go as long as the regiment remained, doing ordinary duty, was quite another. Everybody whom he consulted, even Lady Jane, though she began to be a little frightened by the responsibility, assured him that old Tredgold would never hold out for a year. Impossible! an old man in shaky health who adored his daughter. 'Doubt if he'll give you time to get on board before he's after you,' Algy said. 'You'll find telegrams at Suez or at Aden or somewhere,' said another; and a third chanted (being at once poetical and musical, which was not common in the regiment) a verse which many of them thought had been composed for the occasion:

'Come back, come back,' he cried in grief  
Across the stormy water,  
'And I'll forgive your Highland chief,  
My daughter, O my daughter!'

'Though Charlie ain't a Highland chief, you know,' said one of the youngsters. 'If it had been Algy, now!'

All these things worked very deeply in the brain of Sir Charles Somers, Baronet. He spent a great deal of time thinking of them. A year in India would be great fun. Stella, for her part, was wild with delight at the thought of it. If it could but be made quite clear that old Tredgold, dying for the loss of his favourite child, would be sure to send for her! Everybody said there was not a doubt on the subject. Stella, who ought to know, was sure of it; so was Lady Jane, though she had got frightened and cried, 'Oh, don't

ask me!' when importuned the hundredth time for her opinion. If a fellow could only be quite sure! Sometimes a chilling vision of the 'old beggar' came across Charlie's mind, and the courage began to ooze out at his fingers' ends. That old fellow did not look like an old fellow who would give in. He looked a dangerous old man, an old man capable of anything. Charles Somers was by no means a coward, but when he remembered the look which Mr. Tredgold had cast upon him, all the strength went out of him. To marry an expensive wife who had never been stinted in her expenses and take her out to India, and then find that there was no relenting, remorseful father behind them, but only the common stress and strain of a poor man's life in a profession, obliged to live upon his pay! What should he do if this happened? But everybody around him assured him that it could not, would not happen. Stella had the old gentleman 'on toast.' He could not live without her; he would send to the end of the world to bring her back; he would forgive anything, Highland chief or whosoever it might be. Even Lady Jane said so. 'Don't ask me to advise you,' that lady cried. 'I daren't take the responsibility. How can I tell whether Stella and you are fond enough of each other to run such a risk? Old Mr. Tredgold? Oh, as for old Mr. Tredgold, I should not really fear any lasting opposition from him. He may bluster a little, he may try to be overbearing, he may think he can frighten his daughter. But, of course, he will give in. Oh yes, he will give in. Stella is everything to him. She is the very apple of his eye. It is very unjust to Katherine I always have said, and always will say. But that is how it is. Stella's little finger is more to him than all the rest of the world put together. But please, please don't ask advice from me!'

Sir Charles walked up and down the room, the room at Steep-hill, the room at the barracks, wherever he happened to be, and pulled his moustache almost till the blood came. But neither that intimate counsellor, nor his fellow-officers, nor his anxious friends gave him any definite enlightenment. He was in love, too, in his way, which pushed him on: but he was by no means without prudence, which held him back. If old Tredgold did not break his heart, if he took the other one into Stella's place—for, to be sure, Katherine was his daughter also, though not equal to Stella! If!—it is a little word, but there is terrible meaning in it. In that case what would happen? He shuddered and turned away from the appalling thought.

## CHAPTER XIV.

'KATE, Kate, Kate!' cried Stella. All had been quiet between the two rooms connected by that open door. Katherine was fastening the ribbon at her neck before the glass. This made her less ready to respond to Stella's eager summons; but the tone of the third repetition of her name was so urgent that she dropped the ends of the ribbon and flew to her sister. Stella was leaning half out of the open window. 'Kate,' she cried—'Kate, he has sent him away!'

'Who is sent away?' cried Katherine in amazement.

Stella's answer was to seize her sister by the arm and pull her half out of the window, endangering her equilibrium. Thus enforced, however, Katherine saw the figure of Sir Charles Somers disappearing round the corner of a group of trees, which so entirely recalled the image, coarse yet expressive, of a dog with its tail between its legs that no certainty of disappointment and failure could be more complete. The two girls stared after him until he had disappeared, and then Stella drew her sister in again, and they looked into each other's eyes for a moment. Even Stella the unsubduable was cowed; her face was pale, her eyes round and staring with astonishment and trouble; the strength was all taken out of her by bewilderment. What did it mean? Papa—papa! he who had denied her nothing, who had been the more pleased the more costly was the toy which she demanded! Had Charlie offended him? Had he gone the wrong way to work? What could he possibly have done to receive a rebuff from papa?

'Of course I shall not stand it,' Stella cried when she had recovered herself a little. 'He shall not have much peace of his life if he crosses me. You let him dance upon you, Kate, and never said a word: though I don't suppose you cared, or surely you would have stood out a little more than you did. But he shan't dance upon me—he shall soon find out the difference. I am going to him at once to ask what he means.' She rushed towards the door, glowing anew with courage and spirit, but then suddenly stopped, and came running back, throwing herself suddenly on Katherine's shoulder.

'Oh, Kate, why should parents be so hard,' she said, shedding a few tears—'and so hypocritical!' she exclaimed, rousing herself

again—'pretending to be ready to do everything for you, and then doing nothing!'

'Oh, hush, Stella!' cried Katherine, restraining her; 'there is nothing you have wanted till now that papa has not done.'

'What!' cried the girl indignantly. 'Diamonds and such wretched things.' She made a gesture as if to pull something from her throat and throw it on the floor, though the diamonds, naturally, at this hour in the morning, were not there. 'But the first thing I really want—the only thing—oh, let me go, Kate, let me go and ask him what he means!'

'Wait a little,' said Katherine—'wait a little; it may not be as bad as we think; it may not be bad at all. Let us go down as if nothing had happened. Perhaps Sir Charles has only—gone—to fetch something.'

'Like that?' cried Stella; and then a something of the ridiculous in the drooping figure came across her volatile mind. He was so like, so very like, that dog with his tail between his legs. She burst out into a laugh. 'Poor Charlie, oh, poor Charlie! he looked exactly like—but I will pay papa out for this,' the girl cried.

'Oh, not now,' said Katherine. 'Remember, he is an old man—we must try not to cross him but to soothe him. He may have been vexed to think of losing you, Stella. He may have been—a little sharp; perhaps he wanted to—seem to break it off—only for a time.'

'And you think he might succeed, I shouldn't wonder,' Stella cried, tossing her head high. To tell the truth, Katherine was by no means sure that he might not succeed. She had not a great confidence in the depth of the sentiment which connected her sister and Sir Charles. She believed that on one side or the other that tie might be broken, and that it would be no great harm. But she made no reply to Stella's question. She only begged her to have patience a little, to make no immediate assault upon her father. 'You know the doctor said he must be very regular—and not be disturbed—in his meals and things.'

'Oh, if it is lunch you are thinking of!' cried Stella with great disdain; but after a little she consented to take things quietly and await the elucidation of events. The meal that followed was not, however, a very comfortable meal. Mr. Tredgold came in with every evidence of high spirits, but was also nervous, not knowing what kind of reception he was likely to meet with. He was evidently relieved when they seated themselves at table without any questions, but it was a relief not unmingled

with excitement. He talked continuously and against time, but he neither asked about their visit as he usually did, nor about the previous night's entertainment, nor Stella's appearance nor her triumphs. Stella sat very silent at her side of the table. And Katherine thought that her father was a little afraid. He made haste to escape as soon as the luncheon was over, and it was not a moment too soon, for Stella's excitement was no longer restrainable. 'What has he said to Charlie?—what has he done to him?' she cried. 'Do you think he would dare send him away for good and never say a word to me? What is the meaning of it, Kate? You would not let me speak, though it choked me to sit and say nothing. Where is my Charlie? and oh, how dared papa, how dared he, to send him away?'

Katherine suggested that he might still be lingering about, waiting for the chance of seeing one of them, and Stella darted out accordingly and flew through the grounds, in and out of the trees, with her uncovered head shining in the sun, but came back with no further enlightenment. She then proceeded imperiously to her father's room; where, however, she was again stopped by the butler, who announced that master was having his nap and was not to be disturbed. All this delayed the explanation and prolonged the suspense, which was aggravated, as in so many cases, by the arrival of visitors. 'So you have got back, Stella, from your grand visit? Oh, do tell us all about it!' It was perhaps the first fiery ordeal of social difficulty to which that undisciplined little girl had been exposed. And it was so much the more severe that various other sentiments came in—pride in the visit, which was so much greater a privilege than was accorded to the ordinary inhabitants of Sliplin; pride, too, in a show of indifference to it, desire to make her own glories known, and an equally strong desire to represent these glories as nothing more than were habitual and invariable. In the conflict of feeling Stella was drawn a little out of herself and out of the consideration of her father's unimaginable behaviour. Oh, if they only knew the real climax of all! If only a hint could have been given of the crowning glory, of the new possession she had acquired, and the rank to which she was about to be elevated!

Stella did not think of 'a trumpery baronet' now. It was the Earl whom she thought trumpery, a creation of this reign, as Miss Mildmay said, whereas the Somers went back to the Anglo-Saxons. Stella did not know very well who the Anglo-Saxons were. She did not know that baronetcies are comparatively modern inven-

tions. She only knew that to be Lady Somers was a fine thing, and that she was going to attain that dignity. But then, papa—who was papa, to interfere with her happiness? what could he do to stop a thing she had made up her mind to?—stood in the way. It was papa's fault that she could not make that thrilling, that tremendous announcement to her friends. Her little tongue trembled on the edge of it. At one moment it had almost burst forth. Oh, how silly to be talking of Steephill, of the dance, of the rides, of going to the covert side with the sportsmen's luncheon—all these things which unengaged persons, mere spectators of life, make so much of—when she had it in her power to tell something so much more exciting, something that would fly not only through Sliplin and all along the coast but over the whole island before night! And to think she could not tell it—must not say anything about it because of papa!

Thus Stella fretted through the afternoon, determined, however, to 'have it out with papa' the moment her visitors were gone, and not, on the whole, much afraid. He had never crossed her in her life before. Since the time when Stella crying for it in the nursery was enough to secure any delight she wanted, till now, when she stood on the edge of life and all its excitements, nothing that she cared for had ever been refused her. She had her little ways of getting whatever she wanted. It was not that he was always willing or always agreed in her wishes; if that had been so, the prospect before her would have been more doubtful; but there had been things which he did not like and had yet been made to consent to because of Stella's wish. Why should he resist her now for the first time? There was no reason in it, no probability in it, no sense. He had been able to say No to Charlie—that was quite another thing. Charlie was very nice, but he was not Stella, though he might be Stella's chosen; and papa had, no doubt, a little spite against him because of that adventure in the yacht, and because he was poor, and other things. But Stella herself—was it possible that papa could ever hold head against her, look her in the face and deny her anything? No, certainly no! She was going over this in her mind while the visitors were talking, and even when she was giving them an account of what she wore. Her new white, and her diamonds—what diamonds! Oh, hadn't they heard? A *rivière* that papa had given her; not a big one, you know, like an old lady's—a little one, but such stones, exactly like drops of dew! As she related this, her hopes—nay, certainties—rose high. She had

not needed to hold up her little finger to have those jewels—a word had done it, the merest accidental word. She had not even had the trouble of wishing for them. And to imagine that he would be likely to cross her now!

‘Stella! Stella! where are you going?’ Katherine cried.

‘I am going—to have it out with papa.’ The last visitor had just gone; Stella caught the cloth on the tea-table in the sweep of her dress, and disordered everything as she flew by. But Katherine, though so tidy, did not stop to restore things to their usual trimness. She followed her sister along the passage a little more slowly, but with much excitement too. Would Stella conquer, as she usually did? or, for the first time in her life, would she find a blank wall before her which nothing could break down? Katherine could not but remember the curt intimation which had been given to her that James Stanford had been sent away and was never to be spoken of more. But then she was not Stella—she was very different from Stella; she had always felt even (or fancied) that the fact that James Stanford’s suit had been to herself and not to Stella had something to do with his rejection. That anyone should have thought of Katherine while Stella was by! She blamed herself for this idea as she followed Stella flying through the long and intricate passages to have it out with papa. Perhaps she had been wrong, Katherine said to herself. If papa held out against Stella this time, she would feel sure she had been wrong.

Stella burst into the room without giving any indication of her approach, and Katherine went in behind her—swept by the wind of her going. But what they saw was a vacant room, the fire purring to itself like a cat, with sleepy little starts and droppings, a level sunbeam coming in broad at one window, and on the table two lines of silver money stretched along the dark table-cloth, and catching the eye. They were irregular lines—one all of shillings straight and unbroken, the other shorter, and made up with a half-crown and a sixpence. What was the meaning of this? They consulted each other with their eyes.

‘I am coming directly,’ said Mr. Tredgold from an inner room. The door was open. It was the room in which his safe was, and they could hear him rustling his papers, putting in or taking out something. ‘Oh, papa, make haste! I am waiting for you,’ Stella cried in her impatience. She could scarcely brook at the last moment this unnecessary delay.

He came out, but not for a minute more; and then he was

wiping his lips as if he had been taking something to support himself; which indeed was the case, and he had need of it. He came in with a great show of cheerfulness, rubbing his hands. 'What, both of you?' he said, 'I thought it was only Stella. I am glad both of you are here. Then you can tell me——'

'Papa, I will tell you nothing, nor shall Kate, till you have answered my question. What have you done to Charlie Somers? Where is he? where have you sent him? and how—how—how dare—how could you have sent him away?'

'That's his money,' said the old gentleman, pointing to the table. 'You'd better pick it up and send it to him; he might miss it afterwards. The fool thought he could lay down money with me; there's only seventeen shillings of it,' said Mr. Tredgold contemptuously—'not change for a sovereign! But he might want it. I don't think he had much more in his pocket, and I don't want his small change; no, nor nobody else's. You can pick it up and send it back.'

'What does all this mean?' asked Stella in imperious tones, though her heart quaked she could scarcely tell why. 'Why have you Charlie Somers's money on your table? and why—why have you sent him away?'

Mr. Tredgold seated himself deliberately in his chair, first removing the newspaper that lay in it, folding that and placing it carefully on a stand by his side. 'Well, my little girl,' he said, also taking off his spectacles and folding them before he laid them down, 'that's a very easy one to answer. I sent him away because he didn't suit me, my dear.'

'But he suited me,' cried Stella, 'which is surely far more important.'

'Well, my pet, you may think so, but I don't. I gave him my reasons. I say nothing against him—a man as I know nothing of, and don't want to know. It's all the same who you send to me; they'll just hear the same thing. The man I give my little girl to, will have to count out shillin' for shillin' with me. That fellow took me at my word, don't you see?—took out a handful of money and began to count it out as grave as a judge. But he couldn't do it, even at that. Seventeen shillings! not so much as change for a sovereign,' said Mr. Tredgold with a chuckle. 'I told him as he was an ass for his pains. Thousand pound for thousand pound down, that's my rule; and all the baronets in the kingdom—or if they were dukes for that matter—won't get me out of it.'

'Papa, do you know what you are saying?' Stella was so utterly bewildered that she did not at all know what she was saying, in the sudden arrest of all her thoughts.

'I think so, pet; very well indeed, I should say. I'm a man that has always been particular about business arrangements. Business is one thing; feelings, or so forth, is another. I never let feelings come in when it's a question of business. Money down on the table—shillin's, or thousands, which is plainer, for thousands, and that's all about it; the man who can't do that don't suit me.'

Stella stood with two red patches on her cheeks, with her mouth open, with her eyes staring before the easy and complacent old gentleman in his chair. He was, no doubt, conscious of the passion and horror with which she was regarding him, for he shifted the paper and the spectacles a little nervously to give himself a countenance; but he took no notice otherwise, and maintained his easy position—one leg crossed over the other, his foot swinging a little—even after she burst forth.

'Papa, do you say this to me—to *me*? And I have given him my word, and I love him, though you don't know what that means. Papa, can you look me in the face—me, Stella, and dare to say that you have sent my Charlie away?'

'My dear,' said Mr. Tredgold, 'he ain't your Charlie, and never will be. He's Sir Charles Somers, Bart., a fine fellow, but I don't think we shall see him here again: and I can look my little Stella quite well in the face.'

He did not like to do it, though. He gave her one glance, and then turned his eyes to his paper again.

'Papa,' cried Stella, stamping her foot, 'I won't have it! I shall not take it from you! Whatever you say, he shall come back here. I won't give him up; no, not if you should shut me up on bread and water—not if you should put me in prison, or drag me by the hair of my head, or kill me! which, I think, is what you must want to do.'

'You little hussy! You never had so much as a whipping in your life, and I am not going to begin now. Take her away, Katie. If she cries till Christmas she won't change me. Crying's good for many things, but not for business. Stella, you can go away.'

'Oh, papa, how can you say Stella, and be so cruel!' Stella threw herself down suddenly by his side and seized his hand, upon which she laid down her wet cheek. 'You have always

done everything for Stella. Never—never has my papa refused me anything. I am not used to it. I can't bear it! Papa, it is *me* whose heart you are breaking. Papa, *me!* Stella, it is Stella!’

‘Kate, for goodness’ sake take her away. It is no use. She is not going to come over me. Stella’s a very good name for anything else, but it’s not a name in business. Go away, child. Take her away. But, Katie, if there’s anything else she would like now, a new carriage, or a horse, or a bracelet, or a lot of dresses, or anything—anything in that way——’

Stella drew herself up to her full height; she dried her eyes; she turned upon her father with that instinct of the drama which is so strong in human nature. ‘I scorn all your presents; I will take nothing from you—nothing, as long as I live, you cruel, cruel father,’ she cried.

Later, when Mr. Tredgold had gone out in his Bath-chair for his afternoon ‘turn,’ Stella came back very quietly to his room and gathered up poor Charlie’s shillings. She did not know very much about the value of money, though she spent so much money; indeed, if she had ever felt the need of it it was in this prosaic form of a few shillings. She thought he might want them, poor Charlie, whom she had not the faintest intention of giving up, whatever papa might say.

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## CHAPTER XV.

THIS scene, however, though it made her very angry, and even gave her a pang of discouragement for the moment, had no permanent effect on Stella. She soon recovered her spirits, and soon, indeed, was once more in the highest feather, flying everywhere, scarcely touching the ground with her feet. ‘Oh yes! I’m engaged to Sir Charles,’ she said to all her friends. ‘Papa won’t hear of it, but he will have to give in.’

‘Papás always give in when the young people hold out,’ said some injudicious sympathiser.

‘Don’t they?’ cried Stella, giving a kiss to that lady. She was not in the least afraid. There was a great deal of gaiety going on at the time, both in the village (as it was fashionable to call the town of Sliplin) and in the county, and Stella met her Charlie everywhere, Mr. Tredgold having no means, and perhaps no inclination, to put a stop to this. He did not

want to interfere with her pleasures. If she liked to dance and 'go on' with that fellow, let her. She should not marry him; that was all. The old gentleman had no wish to be unkind to his daughter. He desired her to have her fling like the rest, to enjoy herself as much as possible; only for this one thing he had put down his foot.

'When is that confounded regiment going away?' he asked Katherine.

'Dear papa,' Katherine replied, 'won't you think it over again? Charlie Somers has perhaps no money, but Stella is very fond of him, and he of——'

'Hold your tongue!' said old Tredgold. 'Hold your confounded tongue! If I don't give in to her, do you think it'—with a dash—'likely that I will to you?'

Katherine retreated very quickly, for when her father began to swear she was frightened. He did not swear in an ordinary way, and visions of apoplexy were associated to her with oaths. Stella did not care. She would have let him swear as long as he liked, and paid no attention. She went to her parties almost every night, glittering in her *rivière* of diamonds and meeting Sir Charles everywhere. They had all the airs of an engaged couple, people said. And it was thought quite natural, for nobody believed that old Tredgold would stand out. And no one gave him any warning of what was going on. The whole island was in a conspiracy on behalf of the lovers. Nor was it like any mere abetting of domestic insurrection, for the opinion was unanimous that the father would give in. Why, Stella could do anything with him! Stella was his favourite, as he had showed on every possible occasion. Everybody knew it, even Katherine, who made no struggle against the fact. To think of his having the strength of mind really to deny Stella anything! It was impossible. He was playing with her a little now, only for the pleasure of being coaxed and wheedled, many people thought. But when the time came, of course he would give in. So Stella thought, like everybody else. There was nobody but Katherine and, as I have said, Somers himself who did not feel quite sure. As time went on, the two ladies who went to all the parties and saw everything—the two old cats, Mrs. Shanks and Miss Mildmay—had many consultations on the subject over the invisible rail of separation between their gardens. It had been a very bright October, and even the beginning of the next dreary month was far milder than usual, and in the mornings, when the sun shone, these

ladies were still to be found on their terraces, caressing the last remnants of their flowers, and cutting the last chrysanthemums and dahlias.

'Stella danced every dance last night with *that* Sir Charles,' Miss Mildmay said.

'But she always does, my dear; and why shouldn't she, when she is going to marry him?'

There was really no answer to this, which was so well ascertained a fact, and which everybody knew.

'But I wonder if old Mr. Tredgold knows how much they are together? As he never goes out himself, it is so easy to keep him deceived. I wonder, Jane Shanks,' said Miss Mildmay, 'whether you or I should say a word?'

'You may say as many words as you please, Ruth Mildmay; but I shan't,' cried the other. 'I would not interfere for the world.'

'I am not the least afraid of interfering,' Miss Mildmay said; and she succeeded in persuading her friend to go out in the Midge once more, and call at the Cliff, on an afternoon when the girls were known to be out of the way.

'We ought, I am sure, to congratulate you, Mr. Tredgold. We heard that you did not approve, and, of course, it must be dreadful for you to think of losing Stella; but as it is going on so long, we feel, at last, that the engagement must be true.'

'What engagement?' said the old man. He liked to amuse himself with the two old cats. He put his newspaper away and prepared to 'get his fun out of them.'

'Oh, the engagement between Stella and Sir Charles,' said Mrs. Shanks with bated breath.

'Oh! they're engaged, are they?' he said, with that laugh which was like an electrical bell.

'Dear Mr. Tredgold, it is given out everywhere. They are for ever together. They dance every dance with one another.'

'Confounded dull, I should think, for my little girl. You take my word, she'll soon tire of that,' he said.

'Oh, but she does not tire of it; you don't go out with them, you don't see things. I assure you they are always together. If you don't approve of it, Mr. Tredgold, indeed—indeed you should put a stop to it. It isn't kind to dear Stella.'

'Oh, stop, stop, Ruth Mildmay!' cried Mrs. Shanks. 'Stella knows very well just how far she can go. Stella would never do anything that was displeasing to her dear papa. May I pour out the tea for you, dear Mr. Tredgold, as the girls are not in?'

Mr. Tredgold gave the permission with a wave of his hand, and hoped that Miss Mildmay would say just as much as she pleased.

'I like to know what my girls do when they're out,' he said. 'I like to know that Stella is enjoying herself. That's what they go out for. Just to get themselves as much pleasure as is to be had, in their own way.'

'But you would not wish them to compromise themselves,' said Miss Mildmay. 'Oh, I wouldn't interfere for the world. But as you don't go out with them you ought to be told. I do hope you approve of Sir Charles, Mr. Tredgold. He is a nice young man enough. He has been a little fast; but so have they all; and he is old enough now to have more sense. I am sure he will make you a very good son-in-law. So long as you approve——'

'I approve of my little girl enjoying herself,' said the old man. 'Bring some more muffins, John; there's plenty in the house, I hope. I know why you won't take that piece, Miss Mildmay, because it is the last in the plate and you think you will never get married.' He accompanied this with a tremendous tinkle of a laugh, as if it were the greatest joke in the world.

Miss Mildmay waved her hand with dignity, putting aside the foolish jest, and also putting aside the new dish of muffins, which that dignity would not permit her to touch.

'The question is,' she said, 'not my marriage, which does not concern you, Mr. Tredgold, but dear Stella's, which does.'

'Mr. Tredgold is so fond of his joke,' Mrs. Shanks said.

'Yes, I'm fond of my joke, ain't I? I'm a funny man. Many of the ladies call me so. Lord! I like other people to have their fun too. Stella's welcome to hers, as long as she likes. She's a kitten, she is; she goes on playin' and springin' as long as anybody will fling a bit of string at her. But she's well in hand all the same. She knows, as you say, just how far to go.'

'Then she has your approval, we must all presume,' said Miss Mildmay, rising from her chair, though Mrs. Shanks had not half finished her tea.

'Oh, she's free to have her fun,' Mr. Tredgold said.

What did it mean, her fun? This question was fully discussed between the two ladies in the Midge. Marriage is no fun, if it comes to that they both agreed, and the phrase was very ambiguous; but still no man in his senses, even Mr. Tredgold,

could allow his young daughter to make herself so conspicuous if he did not mean to consent in the end.

'I am very glad to hear, Stella, that it is all right about your marriage,' Mrs. Shanks said next time she met the girls. 'Your papa would not say anything very definite; but still, he knows all about it, and you are to take your own way, as he says.'

'Did he say I was to have my own way?' said Stella, in a flush of pleasure.

'At least, he said the same thing. Yes, I am sure that was what he meant. He was full of his jokes, don't you know? But that must have been what he meant; and I am sure I wish you joy with all my heart, Stella, dear.'

Stella went dancing home after this, though Katherine walked very gravely by her side.

'I knew papa would give in at last. I knew he never would stand against me, when he knew I was in earnest this time,' she cried.

'Do you think he would tell Mrs. Shanks, after sending off both of us, and frightening me?'

'You are so easily frightened,' cried Stella. 'Yes, I shouldn't wonder at all if he told Mrs. Shanks. He likes the two old cats; he knows they will go and publish it all over the place. He would think I should hear just as soon as if he had told me, and so I have. I will run in and give him a kiss, for he is a dear old soul, after all.'

Stella did run in and gave her father a tumultuous kiss, and roused him out of a nap.

'Oh, papa, you dear, you old darling—you best papa in the world!' she cried.

Mr. Tredgold felt a little cross at first, but the kiss and the praises were sweet to him. He put his arms round her as she stood over him.

'What have I done now?' he said, with his tinkling laugh.

'You have done just what I wanted most—what it was dearest of you to do,' she cried. 'Mrs. Shanks told me. You told her, of course, dear papa, because you knew it would be published directly all over the place.'

'Oh, the two old cats!' he said, tinkling more than ever. 'That's what they made of it, is it? I said you might have your fun, my dear. You are free to have your fun as much as ever you like. That's what I said, and that's what I shall say as long

as you're amusing yourself, Stella. You can have your fling; I shan't stop you. Enjoy yourself as long as you can, if that's what you like,' he said.

'Oh, papa, what do you mean?—what do you mean?' cried Stella. 'Don't you mean, dear papa,' she continued, with renewed caresses, putting her arms round his neck, pressing his bald head upon her breast, 'that you'll let Charlie come, that he needn't go to India, that we are to be married, and that you'll give us your blessing, and—and everything? That is what you mean, isn't it, dear papa?'

'Don't strangle me, child,' he said, coughing and laughing. 'There's such a thing, don't you know? as to be killed with kindness. I've told you what I'll do, my dear,' he continued. 'I shall let you have your fun as long as ever you like. You can dance with him down to the very ship's side, if you please. That won't do any harm to me: but he don't set a foot in this house unless he's ready to table pound for pound with me. Where's his shillin's, by the way, Katie? He ought to have had his shillin's; he might have wanted them, poor man. Ah, don't strangle me, I tell you, Stella!'

'I wish I could!' cried Stella, setting her little teeth. 'You deserve it, you old dreadful, dreadful——'

'What is she saying, Kate? Never mind; it was swearing or something, I suppose—all the fault of those old cats, not mine. I said she should have her swing, and she can have her swing and welcome. That's what she wants, I suppose. You have always had your fun, Stella. You don't know what a fine thing it is to have your fun and nobody to oppose you. I never had that in my life. I was always pulled up sharp. Get along now, I want my nap before dinner; but mind, I have said all I'm going to say. He can table down pound for pound with me, if he has the money—otherwise, not another word. I may be a funny man,' said Mr. Tredgold, 'but when I put my foot down, none of you will get it up again, that's all I have got to say.'

'You are a very hard, cruel, tyrannical father,' said Stella, 'and you never will have love from anyone as long as you live!'

'We'll see about that,' he said, with a grimace, preparing to fling his handkerchief over his head, which was his way when he went to sleep.

'Oh, papa!—oh, dear papa! Of course I did not mean what I said then. I want no fling and no fun, but to settle down with

Charlie, and to be always ready when you want me as long as I live.'

'You shall settle down with some man as I approve of, as can count down his hundreds and his thousands on the table, Stella. That's what you are going to do.'

'Papa, you never would be so cruel to me, your little Stella? I will have no man if I have not Charlie—never, never, if he had all the money in the world.'

'Well, there's no hurry; you are only twenty,' he said, blinking at her with sleepy eyes. 'I don't want to get rid of you. You may give yourself several years to have your fun before you settle down.'

Stella, standing behind her father's bald and defenceless head, looked for a minute or two like a pretty but dreadful demon, threatening him with a raised fist and appalling looks. Suddenly, however, there came a transformation scene—her arms slid round his neck once more; she put her cheek against his bald head. 'Papa,' she said, her voice faltering between fury and the newly-conceived plan, which, in its way, was fun, 'you gave me a kind of an alternative once. You said, if I didn't have Charlie—'

'Well?' said the old man, waking up, with a gleam of amusement in his eyes.

'I could have—you said it yourself—anything else I liked,' said Stella, drooping over the back of his chair. Was she ashamed of herself, or was she secretly overcome with something, either laughter or tears?

'Stella,' cried Katherine, 'do come away now and let papa rest.' The elder sister's face was full of alarm, but for what she was frightened she could scarcely herself have said.

'Let her get it out,' cried Mr. Tredgold. 'Speak up, Stella, my little girl; out with it, my pet. What would it like from its papa?'

'You said I might have anything I liked—more diamonds, a lot of new dresses—'

'And so you shall,' he said, chuckling, till it was doubtful if he would ever recover his breath. 'That's my little girl down to the ground—that's my pet! That's the woman all over—just the woman I like! You shall have all that—diamonds? Yes, if I'd to send out to wherever they come from. And frocks? As many as you can set your face to. Give me a kiss, Stella, and that's a bargain, my dear.'

'Very well, papa,' said Stella, with dignity, heaving a soft

sigh. 'You will complete the parure, please; a handsome pendant, and a star for my hair, and a bracelet—but handsome, really good, fit for one of the princesses.'

'As good as they make 'em, Stella.'

'And I must have them,' she said languidly, 'for that ball that is going to be given to the regiment before they go away. As for the dresses,' she added, with more energy, 'papa, I shall fleece you—I shall rob you! I will order everything I take a fancy to—everything that is nice, everything that is dear. I shall ruin you!' she cried, clapping her hands together with a sound like a pistol-shot over his head.

Through all this the tinkling of his laugh had run on. It burst out now and had a little solo of its own, disturbed by a cough, while the girls were silent and listened. 'That's the sort of thing,' he cried. 'That's my Stella—that's my pet! Ruin me! I can stand it. Have them as dear as they're made. I'll write for the diamonds to-night; and you shall go to the ball all shinin' from head to foot, my Stella—that's what you've always been since you were born—my little star!'

Then she pulled the handkerchief over his head, gave him a kiss through it, and hurried away.

'Oh, Stella, Stella!' cried Katherine under her breath. She repeated the words when they had gone into their own room. Stella, flushed and excited, had thrown herself upon the stool before the piano and began to play wildly, with jars and crashes of sound. 'Oh, Stella, how dared you do such a thing? How dared you barter away your love, for he is your love, for diamonds and frocks? Oh, Stella, you are behaving very, very badly. I am not fond of Charles Somers; but surely, if you care for him at all, he is worth more than that. And how dared you—how dared you sell him—to papa?'

But Stella said never a word. She went on playing wild chords and making crashes of dreadful sound, which, to Katherine, who was more or less a musician, were beyond bearing. She seized her sister's arm after a moment and stopped her almost violently. 'Stop that, stop that, and answer me!' she cried.

'Don't you like my music, Kate? It was all out of my own head—what you call improvising. I thought you would like me to go to the piano for comfort. So it is an ease to one's mind—it lets the steam off,' cried Stella with a last crash, louder and more discordant than the others. Then she abandoned the piano and threw herself down in a chair.

'Wasn't that a funny talk I had with papa? You may tell Charlie, if you like, it will amuse him so. They would all think it the most glorious—I shall tell it to everybody when I am on the——'

Here Stella stopped, and gave her sister a half-inquiring, half-malicious look, which found no response in Katherine's grieved eyes.

'I don't know what you mean, Stella,' she said. 'If you mean what papa thinks, it is the most odious, humiliating bargain; if you mean something else, it is—but I can't say what it is, for I don't know what you mean. You are going to be a traitor one way or else another, either to Charlie or to papa. I don't know which is worse, to break that man's heart (for he is fond of you) by throwing him over at the last moment, or to steal papa's money and break his heart too.'

'You needn't trouble yourself so much about people's hearts, Kate. How do you know that Charlie would have me if he thought papa wouldn't give in? And, as for papa's heart, he would only have to give in, and then all would be right. It isn't such a complicated matter as you think. You are so fond of making out that things are complicated. I think them quite simple. Papa has just to make up his mind which he likes best, me or his money. He thinks he likes his money best. Well, perhaps later he will find he doesn't, and then he has only got to change. Where's the difficulty? As for me, you must just weave webs about me as long as you please. I am not complicated—not a bit. I shall do what I like best. I am not sure even now which I like best, but I shall know when the time comes. And in the meantime I am laying up all the best evidence to judge from. I shall send Stevens up to town for patterns to-morrow. I shall get the very richest and the very dearest things that Louise has or can get. Oh,' cried the girl, clapping her hands with true enjoyment, 'what fun it will be!'

## CHAPTER XVI.

EVERYTHING now began to converge towards the great ball which was to be given in Sliplin to the regiment before it went off to India. It was in its little way something like that great Brussels ball which came before Waterloo. They were to embark next

morning, these heroic soldiers. If they were not going to fight, they were at least going to dare the dangers of the deep in a troop-ship, which is not comfortable; and they were fully impressed with their own importance as the heroes of the moment. Lady Jane was at the head of the undertaking, along with certain other magnates of the neighbourhood. Without them I doubt whether the Sliplin people proper would have felt it necessary to give the Chestnuts a ball; the officers had never been keen about the village parties. They had gone to the Cliff, where everything smelt of gold, but they had not cared for the other little entertainments—for lawn tennis in the summer and other mild dissipations at which their presence would have been an excitement and delight. So that the good people in Sliplin had looked rather coldly upon the suggestion at first. When it was settled, however, and the greatness of the event was realised, the Sliplin people warmed up into interest. A ball is a ball, however it is brought about.

Mr. Tredgold subscribed liberally, and so of course Stella and Katherine had been 'in it' from the very first. They took the greatest interest in the decorations, running up and down to the great hall in which it was to be held, and superintending everything. Mrs. Shanks and Miss Mildmay also looked in a great many times in a day, and so did many other of the Sliplin ladies, moved at last to 'take an interest' when it was no longer possible that it should cost them anything.

'I hear they have plenty of money for everything—too much indeed—so it is just as well that we did not come forward. If we had come forward I don't know what the lists would have risen to. As it is, I hear there is almost too much. Mr. Tredgold insists upon champagne—oceans of champagne. I am sure I hope that the young men will behave properly. I don't approve of such rivers of wine. If they are fond of dancing, surely they can enjoy their dancing without that.'

This is a very general opinion among the ladies of country towns, and gives a fine disinterested aspect to the pursuit of dancing for its own sake; but no doubt the Chestnuts liked it better when there were oceans of champagne.

It had been known all along in the place that Stella Tredgold meant to surpass herself on this occasion, which was a matter calling forth much astonishment and speculation among her friends. It was also known, more or less, that Sir Charles Somers had made his proposals to her father and had been refused. All

his own friends were well aware of the fact, and it was not to be supposed that it should be a secret at Sliplin. Sir Charles had been refused by Mr. Tredgold because he had no money, not by Stella, who was as much in love with him, everybody said, as he was with her. It was enough to see them together to be convinced of that. And yet she meant to be the gayest of the gay at the ball on the eve of parting with him! Some of the girls expected and hoped that evidences of a broken heart would be visible even under the lovely white dress and wonderful diamonds in which she was understood to be going to appear. So ridiculous for a girl of her age to wear diamonds, the elder ladies said; and they did not think there would be any evidences of a broken heart. 'She has no heart, that little thing; Lord Uffington will be there, and she will go in for him, now that Sir Charles has failed.' It was strange, it must be admitted, that she should show so much delight in this ball and proclaim her intention of being dressed more gorgeously than she had ever been in her life, on the eve of parting with her lover. Was it to leave such an impression on his mind that he never should forget her? was it to show she didn't care? But nobody could tell. Stella had always been an odd girl, they said, though indeed I do not think that this was true.

She was very much occupied on the day of the ball, still looking after these decorations, and even made a dash across the country in her own little brougham in the morning to get one particular kind of white chrysanthemum which only grew in a cottage garden in the middle of the island. She returned from this wild expedition about noon with the brougham filled with the flowers, and a great air of triumph and excitement. 'Wasn't it clever of me?' she cried. 'I just remembered. We saw them, don't you recollect, Kate? the last time we were out that way. They are just the things that are wanted for the head of the room. I flew to the stables and called Andrews, and we were there—oh, I can't tell you how soon.'

'Nice thing for my horse,' said Mr. Tredgold. 'He's a young devil, that Andrews boy. I shall give him the sack if he doesn't mind.'

'It is my horse,' said Stella; 'the brougham's mine, and the boy's mine. You forget what you said, papa.'

'There never was an extortioner like this little——' said Mr. Tredgold, chuckling; 'drives her horse to death and then feeds him with sugar: just like women—it's what they all do.'

'I think,' said Katherine, 'you might have found some chrysanthemums nearer home.'

'But you see I didn't,' said Stella, with her usual impertinence, breaking into song and tossing her shining head as she walked away.

'Doesn't make much of the parting, and that fellow off to India, does she?' said her father. 'I knew how it would be; I never believe in a girl's swagger, bless you. She's very fond of one man till she sees another. You'll find my lord will make all the running to-night.'

'And if Lord Uffington should propose for Stella,' said Katherine with her grave air, 'which I don't think very likely, but, still—should you keep to your point of view, papa, and insist upon the same test with my lord—as you call him: pound for pound on the table as you say?'

'Certainly I should—if he was a Royal Dook,' Mr. Tredgold said.

'Then it is a pity'—said Katherine; but she said no more, nor would any question bring forth the end of her sentence. She went out and took a walk along the cliff, where there was that beautiful view. It was a very fine day, one of those matchless days of early winter which are perhaps the most beautiful of English weather. The sun was blazing, calling forth the dazzling whiteness of that sharp cliff which was the furthest point to the east, and lighting every wave as with the many coloured facets of a diamond. There were one or two boats out, lying in the light, or moving softly with the slight breeze, which was no more than a little movement in the celestial air—as if suspended between earth and heaven. And to think it was November, that grim month in which everything is dismal! I don't think Katherine was thinking very much about the view, but she was soothed by it in the multitude of her thoughts.

She was out there again very late, between one and two in the morning, after the ball. Stella had wanted to leave early, and would fain have escaped before her sister. But Katherine balked her in this, without having any particular reason for it. She felt only that when Stella went away she must go too, and that though she had seemed so indifferent there was now a great deal of excitement in Stella's gaiety, which was so unrestrained. They went off accordingly, leaving a crowd of disappointed partners shouting complaints and good-nights after them. When they entered the gates, which a sleepy woman came forth from the lodge to

open, Katherine noticed a dark figure which stole in with the carriage.

'Who is that?' she said.

'Oh, Katie, Katie dear, don't say anything!' cried Stella, putting a hand upon her mouth. 'It is Charlie come to say good-bye. I must say one little word to him before he goes; do you think that I am made of stone?'

'Oh no, no!' cried Katherine. 'I have been wondering—I thought you had got over—I didn't know what to think.'

'I shall never get over it,' said Stella vehemently. She was crying with her head against her sister's shoulder. 'Oh, Kate, don't be hard upon me, or say anything! I must—I must have one little half hour with Charlie before he goes away.'

'Indeed—indeed, I shall not say anything! I do feel for you, Stella. I am sorry for him. But, oh, don't stay long, dear, it will only prolong the trouble. And it is so late, and people might say——'

'What could people say if they didn't know? And, Katie,' cried her sister, 'if you stay here to watch over us, while I bid him—I mean talk to him yonder—what could anyone say? Won't it be enough to quench every evil tongue if you are there?'

'I suppose it will,' said Katherine dubiously.

She got down very slowly from the brougham, from which Stella had sprung like an arrow. And Andrews, who drove the warm little carriage which was Stella's, as he was more or less Stella's man, turned immediately and drove away, no doubt to relieve the gatekeeper, who was waiting to close up after him. A sleepy footman had opened the door, and stood waiting while Katherine, in her white cloak, lingered in the porch. The fire was still burning in the hall, and the lamp bright. Katherine told the man to go to bed, and that she would herself fasten the door, and then she turned back to the glory of the night, and the lawn, and all the shrubberies, looking like frosted silver in the moonlight. Stella had disappeared somewhere among the shadows with her lover. Katherine heard a faint sound of steps, and thought she could perceive still a gleam of whiteness among the trees. She stepped out herself upon the walk. It sounded a little crisp under her foot, for there was frost in the air. The moon was glorious, filling earth and heaven with light, and flinging the blackest shadows into all the corners. And the stillness was such that the dropping of one of those last yellow leaves slowly down through the air was like an event. She was warmly

wrapped up in her fur cloak, and, though the hour was eerie, the night was beautiful, and the house with its open door, and the glow of the red fire, and the light of the lamp, gave protection and fellowship. All the rare trees, though sufficiently hardy to bear it, had shrunk a little before that pennyworth of frost, though it was really nothing, not enough to bind the moisture in a little hollow of the path, which Katherine had to avoid as she walked up and down in her satin shoes. After a while she heard the little click of the door at the foot of the steep path which led to the beach, and concluded that Stella had let her lover out that way, and would soon join her. But Katherine was in no hurry; she was not cold, and she had never been out, she thought, in so lovely a night. It carried her away to many thoughts; I will not venture to allege that James Stanford was not one of them. It would have been strange if she had not thought of him in these circumstances. She had never had the chance of saying farewell to him; he had been quenched at once by her father, and he had not had the spirit to come back, which, she supposed, Sir Charles had. He had disappeared and made no sign. Stella was more lucky than she was in every way. Poor Stella! who must just have gone through one of the most terrible of separations! 'Partings that press the life from out young hearts!' Who was it that said that? But still it must be better to have the parting than that he should disappear like a shadow without a word, and be no more seen or heard of—as if he were dead. And perhaps he was dead, for anything she knew.

But, what a long time Stella was of coming back! If she had let him out at that door, she surely should have found her way up the cliff before now. Katherine turned in that direction, and stood still at the top of the path and listened, but could hear nothing. Perhaps she had been mistaken about the click of the door. It was very dark in that deep shadow—too dark to penetrate into the gloom by herself without a lantern, especially as, after all, she was not quite sure that Stella had gone that way. She must at least wait a little longer before making any search which might betray her sister. She turned back again, accordingly, along the round of the broad cliff with its feathering edge of tamarisks. Oh, what a wonderful world of light and stillness! The white cliff to the east shone and flamed in the moonlight; it was like a tall ghost between the blue sea and the blue sky, both of them so indescribably blue—the little ripple breaking the monotony of one, the hosts of stars half veiled in the superior

radiance of the moon diversifying the other. She had never been out on such a beautiful night. It was a thing to remember. She felt that she should never forget (though she certainly was not fond of him at all) the night of Charlie Somers's departure—the night of the ball, which had been the finest Sliplin had ever known.

As Katherine moved along she heard in the distance, beginning to make a little roll of sound, the carriages of the people going away. She must have been quite a long time there when she perceived this; the red fire in the hall was only a speck now. A little anxious, she went back again to the head of the path. She even ventured a few steps down into the profound blackness. 'Stella!' she cried in a low voice, 'Stella!' Then she added, still in a kind of whisper, 'Come back, oh, come back; it is getting so late.'

But she got no reply. There were various little rustlings, and one sound as of a branch that crushed under a step, but no step was audible. Could they be too engrossed to hear her, or was Stella angry or miserable, declining to answer? Katherine, in great distress, threaded her way back among the trees that seemed to get in her way and take pleasure in striking against her, as if they thought her false to her sister. She was not false to Stella, she declared to herself indignantly; but this was too long—she should not have stayed so long. Katherine began to feel cold, with a chill that was not of the night. And then there sounded into the clear shining air the stroke of the hour. She had never heard it so loud before. She felt that it must wake all the house, and bring every one out to see if the girls had not come back. It would wake papa, who was not a very good sleeper, and betray everything. Three! 'Stella, Stella! oh, for goodness' sake, don't stay any longer!' cried Katherine, making a sort of funnel of her two hands, and sending her voice down into the dark.

After all, she said to herself, presently, three was not late for a ball. The rest of the people were only beginning to go away. And a parting which might be for ever! 'It may be for years, and it may be for ever.' The song came into her mind and breathed itself all about her, as a song has a way of doing. Poor things, poor young things! and perhaps they might never see each other again. 'Partings that press the life from out young hearts.' Katherine turned with a sigh and made a little round of the cliff again, without thinking of the view. And then she turned sud-

denly to go back, pausing for a moment to look out once more upon the wonderful round of the sea and sky.

There was something new in it now, something that had not been there before—a tall white sail, like something glorified, like an angel with one foot on the surface of the waves, and one high white wing uplifted. She stood still with a sort of breathless admiration and rapture. Sea and sky had been wonderful before, but they had wanted just that—the white softly moving sail, the faint line of the boat. Where was it she had seen just that before, suddenly coming into sight while she was watching? It was when the *Stella*, when *Stella*—good Heavens!—the *Stella*, and *Stella*——!

Katherine uttered a great cry, and ran wildly towards the house. And then she stopped herself and went back to the cliff and gazed again. It might only be a fishing-boat made into a wonderful thing by the moonlight. When she looked again it had already made a great advance in the direction of the white cliff, to the east; it was crossing the bay, gliding very smoothly over the soft waves. The *Stella*—could it be the *Stella*?—and where was her sister? She gathered up her long white dress in her hands and plunged down the dark path towards the beach. The door was locked, there was not a sound anywhere.

‘*Stella!*’ she cried, louder than ever. ‘*Stella!* where are you?’ but nobody heard, not even in the sleeping house, where surely there must be some one waking who could help her. This made her remember that Stevens, the maid, must be waking, or at least not in bed. She hurried in, past the dying fire in the hall, and up the silent stairs, the sleeping house so still that the creak of a plank under her feet sounded like a shriek. But there was no Stevens to be found, neither in the young ladies’ rooms where she should have been, nor in her own; everything was very tidy, there was not a brush nor a pocket-handkerchief out of place, and the trim, white bed, was not even prepared for any inhabitant. It was as if it were a bed of death.

Then Katherine bethought her to go again to the gardener’s wife in the lodge, who had a lantern. She had been woke up before, perhaps it was less harm to wake her up again (this was not logical, but Katherine was above logic). Finally, the woman was roused, and her husband along with her, and the lantern lighted, and the three made a circle of the shrubberies. There was nothing to be found there. The man declared that the door at the foot of the cliff was not only locked but jammed, so that

it would be very difficult to open it, and he unhesitatingly swore that it was the *Stella* which was now gliding round beyond the Bembridge cliffs.

'How do you know it is the *Stella*? It might be any yacht,' cried Katherine.

The man did not condescend to make any explanation. 'I just knows it,' he said.

It was proved presently by a messenger, despatched in haste to ascertain, that the *Stella* was gone from the pier, and there was nothing more to be said.

The sight of these three, hunting in every corner, filling the grounds with floating gleams of light, and voices and steps no longer subdued, while the house lay open full of sleep, the lamp burning in the hall but nobody stirring, was a strange sight. At length there was a sound heard in the silent place. A window was thrown open, a night-capped head was thrust into the air.

'What the deuce is all this row about?' cried the voice of Mr. Tredgold. 'Who's there? Look out for yourselves, whoever you are; I'm not going to have strangers in my garden at this hour of the night.'

And the old man, startled, put a climax to the confusion by firing wildly into space. The gardener's wife gave a shriek and fell, and the house suddenly woke up, with candles moving from window to window, and men and women calling out in different tones of fury and affright, 'Who is there? Who is there?'

(To be continued.)

## *Fables.*<sup>1</sup>

### XVI.

#### *SOMETHING IN IT.*

THE natives told him many tales. In particular, they warned him of the house of yellow reeds tied with black sinnet, how anyone who touched it became instantly the prey of Akaānga, and was handed on to him by Miru the ruddy, and hoccussed with the kava of the dead, and baked in the ovens and eaten by the eaters of the dead.

‘There is nothing in it,’ said the missionary.

There was a bay upon that island, a very fair bay to look upon; but, by the native saying, it was death to bathe there. ‘There is nothing in that,’ said the missionary; and he came to the bay and went swimming. Presently an eddy took him and bore him towards the reef. ‘Oho!’ thought the missionary, ‘it seems there is something in it after all.’ And he swam the harder, but the eddy carried him away. ‘I do not care about this eddy,’ said the missionary; and even as he said it, he was aware of a house raised on piles above the sea; it was built of yellow reeds, one reed joined with another, and the whole bound with black sinnet; a ladder led to the door, and all about the house hung calabashes. He had never seen such a house, nor yet such calabashes; and the eddy set for the ladder. ‘This is singular,’ said the missionary, ‘but there can be nothing in it.’ And he laid hold of the ladder and went up. It was a fine house; but there was no man there; and when the missionary looked back he saw no island, only the heaving of the sea. ‘It is strange about the island,’ said the missionary, ‘but who’s afraid? my stories are the true ones.’ And he laid hold of a calabash, for he was one that loved curiosities. Now he had no sooner laid hand upon the calabash than that which he handled, and that which he saw and stood on, burst like a bubble and was gone; and night closed

<sup>1</sup> Copyright in the United States, 1895, by Longmans, Green & Co.

upon him, and the waters, and the meshes of the net; and he wallowed there like a fish.

'A body would think there was something in this,' said the missionary. 'But if these tales are true, I wonder what about my tales!'

Now the flaming of Akaānga's torch drew near in the night; and the misshapen hands groped in the meshes of the net; and they took the missionary between the finger and the thumb, and bore him dripping in the night and silence to the place of the ovens of Miru. And there was Miru, ruddy in the glow of the ovens; and there sat her four daughters and made the kava of the dead; and there sat the comers out of the islands of the living dripping and lamenting.

This was a dread place to reach for any of the sons of men. But of all who ever came there, the missionary was the most concerned; and to make things worse the person next him was a convert of his own.

'Aha,' said the convert, 'so you are here like your neighbours? And how about all your stories?'

'It seems,' said the missionary with bursting tears, 'that there was nothing in them.'

By this the kava of the dead was ready and the daughters of Miru began to intone in the old manner of singing. 'Gone are the green islands and the bright sea, the sun and the moon and the forty million stars, and life and love and hope. Henceforth is no more, only to sit in the night and silence, and see your friends devoured; for life is a deceit and the bandage is taken from your eyes.'

Now when the singing was done, one of the daughters came with the bowl. Desire of that kava rose in the missionary's bosom; he lusted for it like a swimmer for the land, or a bridegroom for his bride; and he reached out his hand, and took the bowl, and would have drunk. And then he remembered, and put it back.

'Drink!' sang the daughter of Miru. 'There is no kava like the kava of the dead, and to drink of it once is the reward of living.'

'I thank you. It smells excellent,' said the missionary. 'But I am a blue-ribbon man myself; and though I am aware there is a difference of opinion even in our own confession, I have always held kava to be excluded.'

'What!' cried the convert. 'Are you going to respect a taboo at a time like this? And you were always so opposed to taboos when you were alive!'

'To other people's,' said the missionary. 'Never to my own.'

'But yours have all proved wrong,' said the convert.

'It looks like it,' said the missionary, 'and I can't help that. No reason why I should break my word.'

'I never heard the like of this!' cried the daughter of Miru.

'Pray, what do you expect to gain?'

'That is not the point,' said the missionary. 'I took this pledge for others, I am not going to break it for myself.'

The daughter of Miru was puzzled; she came and told her mother, and Miru was vexed; and they went and told Akaänga.

'I don't know what to do about this,' said Akaänga; and he came and reasoned with the missionary.

'But there *is* such a thing as right and wrong,' said the missionary; 'and your ovens cannot alter that.'

'Give the kava to the rest,' said Akaänga to the daughters of Miru. 'I must get rid of this sea-lawyer instantly, or worse will come of it.'

The next moment the missionary came up in the midst of the sea, and there before him were the palm trees of the island. He swam to the shore gladly, and landed. Much matter of thought was in that missionary's mind.

'I seem to have been misinformed upon some points,' said he. 'Perhaps there is not much in it as I supposed; but there is something in it after all. Let me be glad of that.'

And he rang the bell for service.

#### *Moral.*

The sticks break, the stones crumble,  
The eternal altars tilt and tumble,  
Sanctions and tales dislimn like mist  
About the amazed evangelist.  
He stands unshook from age to youth  
Upon one pin-point of the truth.

### XVII.

#### *FAITH, HALF-FAITH AND NO FAITH AT ALL.*

In the ancient days there went three men upon pilgrimage; one was a priest, and one was a virtuous person, and the third was an old rover with his axe.

As they went, the priest spoke about the grounds of faith.

'We find the proofs of our religion in the works of nature,' said he, and beat his breast.

'That is true,' said the virtuous person.

'The peacock has a scrannel voice,' said the priest, 'as has been laid down always in our books. How cheering!' he cried, in a voice like one that wept. 'How comforting!'

'I require no such proofs,' said the virtuous person.

'Then you have no reasonable faith,' said the priest.

'Great is the right, and shall prevail!' cried the virtuous person. 'There is loyalty in my soul; be sure, there is loyalty in the mind of Odin.'

'These are but playings upon words,' returned the priest. 'A sackful of such trash is nothing to the peacock.'

Just then they passed a country farm where there was a peacock seated on a rail, and the bird opened its mouth and sang with the voice of a nightingale.

'Where are you now?' asked the virtuous person. 'And yet this shakes not me! Great is the truth and shall prevail!'

'The devil fly away with that peacock!' said the priest; and he was downcast for a mile or two.

But presently they came to a shrine, where a Fakeer performed miracles.

'Ah!' said the priest, 'here are the true grounds of faith. The peacock was but an adminicle. This is the base of our religion.' And he beat upon his breast and groaned like one with colic.

'Now to me,' said the virtuous person, 'all this is as little to the purpose as the peacock. I believe because I see the right is great and must prevail; and this Fakeer might carry on with his conjuring tricks till doomsday, and it would not play bluff upon a man like me.'

Now at this the Fakeer was so much incensed that his hand trembled; and lo! in the midst of a miracle the cards fell from up his sleeve.

'Where are you now?' asked the virtuous person. 'And yet it shakes not me!'

'The devil fly away with the Fakeer!' cried the priest. 'I really do not see the good of going on with this pilgrimage.'

'Cheer up!' cried the virtuous person. 'Great is the right and shall prevail!'

'If you are quite sure it will prevail?' says the priest.

'I pledge my word for that,' said the virtuous person.

So the other began to go on again with a better heart.

At last one came running, and told them all was lost: that the powers of darkness had besieged the Heavenly Mansions, that Odin was to die, and evil triumph.

‘I have been grossly deceived,’ cried the virtuous person.

‘All is lost now,’ said the priest.

‘I wonder if it is too late to make it up with the devil?’ said the virtuous person.

‘O, I hope not,’ said the priest. ‘And at any rate we can but try. But what are you doing with your axe?’ says he to the rover.

‘I am off to die with Odin,’ said the rover.

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### XVIII.

#### *THE TOUCHSTONE.*

THE King was a man that stood well before the world, his smile was sweet as clover, but his soul withinsides was as little as a pea. He had two sons; and the younger son was a boy after his heart, but the elder was one whom he feared. It befel one morning that the drum sounded in the dun before it was yet day; and the King rode with his two sons, and a brave array behind them. They rode two hours, and came to the foot of a brown mountain that was very steep.

‘Where do we ride?’ said the elder son.

‘Across this brown mountain,’ said the King, and smiled to himself.

‘My father knows what he is doing,’ said the younger son.

And they rode two hours more, and came to the sides of a black river that was wondrous deep.

‘And where do we ride?’ asked the elder son.

‘Over this black river,’ said the King, and smiled to himself.

‘My father knows what he is doing,’ said the younger son.

And they rode all that day, and about the time of the sun-setting came to the side of a lake, where was a great dun.

‘It is here we ride,’ said the King; ‘to a King’s house, and a priest’s, and a house where you will learn much.’

At the gates of the dun, the King who was a priest met them, and he was a grave man, and beside him stood his daughter, and

she was as fair as the morn, and one that smiled and looked down.

'These are my two sons,' said the first King.

'And here is my daughter,' said the King who was a priest.

'She is a wonderful fine maid,' said the first King, 'and I like her manner of smiling.'

'They are wonderful well-grown lads,' said the second, 'and I like their gravity.'

And then the two Kings looked at each other, and said 'The thing may come about.'

And in the meanwhile the two lads looked upon the maid, and the one grew pale and the other red; and the maid looked upon the ground smiling.

'Here is the maid that I shall marry,' said the elder. 'For I think she smiled upon me.'

But the younger plucked his father by the sleeve. 'Father,' said he, 'a word in your ear. If I find favour in your sight, might not I wed this maid, for I think she smiles upon me?'

'A word in yours,' said the King his father. 'Waiting is good hunting, and when the teeth are shut the tongue is at home.'

Now they were come into the dun, and feasted; and this was a great house, so that the lads were astonished; and the King that was a priest sat at the end of the board and was silent, so that the lads were filled with reverence; and the maid served them smiling with downcast eyes, so that their hearts were enlarged.

Before it was day, the elder son arose, and he found the maid at her weaving, for she was a diligent girl. 'Maid,' quoth he, 'I would fain marry you.'

'You must speak with my father,' said she, and she looked upon the ground smiling, and became like the rose.

'Her heart is with me,' said the elder son, and he went down to the lake and sang.

A little after came the younger son. 'Maid,' quoth he, 'if our fathers were agreed, I would like well to marry you.'

'You can speak to my father,' said she, and looked upon the ground and smiled and grew like the rose.

'She is a dutiful daughter,' said the younger son, 'she will make an obedient wife.' And then he thought 'What shall I do?' and he remembered the King her father was a priest; so he went into the temple and sacrificed a weasel and a hare.

Presently the news got about; and the two lads and the first

King were called into the presence of the King who was a priest, where he sat upon the high seat.

'Little I reckon of gear,' said the King who was a priest, 'and little of power. For we live here among the shadows of things, and the heart is sick of seeing them. And we stay here in the wind like raiment drying, and the heart is weary of the wind. But one thing I love, and that is truth; and for one thing will I give my daughter, and that is the trial stone. For in the light of that stone the seeming goes, and the being shows, and all things besides are worthless. Therefore, lads, if ye would wed my daughter, out foot, and bring me the stone of touch, for that is the price of her.'

'A word in your ear,' said the younger son to his father. 'I think we do very well without this stone.'

'A word in yours,' said his father. 'I am of your way of thinking; but when the teeth are shut the tongue is at home.' And he smiled to the King that was a priest.

But the elder son got to his feet, and called the King that was a priest by the name of father. 'For whether I marry the maid or no, I will call you by that word for the love of your wisdom; and even now I will ride forth and search the world for the stone of touch.' So he said farewell and rode into the world.

'I think I will go, too,' said the younger son, 'if I can have your leave. For my heart goes out to the maid.'

'You will ride home with me,' said his father.

So they rode home, and when they came to the dun, the King had his son into his treasury. 'Here,' said he, 'is the touchstone which shows truth; for there is no truth but plain truth; and if you will look in this, you will see yourself as you are.'

And the younger son looked in it, and saw his face as it were the face of a beardless youth, and he was well enough pleased; for the thing was a piece of a mirror.

'Here is no such great thing to make a work about,' said he; 'but if it will get me the maid, I shall never complain. But what a fool is my brother to ride into the world, and the thing all the while at home.'

So they rode back to the other dun, and showed the mirror to the King that was a priest; and when he had looked in it, and seen himself like a King, and his house like a King's house, and all things like themselves, he cried out and blessed God. 'For now I know,' said he, 'there is no truth but the plain truth; and I am a King indeed, although my heart misgave me.' And

he pulled down his temple, and built a new one; and then the younger son was married to the maid.

In the meantime the elder son rode into the world to find the touchstone of the trial of truth; and whenever he came to a place of habitation, he would ask the men if they had heard of it. And in every place the men answered: 'Not only have we heard of it, but we, alone of all men, possess the thing itself, and it hangs in the side of our chimney to this day.' Then would the elder son be glad, and beg for a sight of it. And sometimes it would be a piece of mirror, that showed the seeming of things, and then he would say, 'This can never be, for there should be more than seeming.' And sometimes it would be a lump of coal, which showed nothing; and then he would say, 'This can never be, for at least there is the seeming.' And sometimes it would be a touchstone indeed, beautiful in hue, adorned with polishing, the light inhabiting its sides; and when he found this, he would beg the thing, and the persons of that place would give it him, for all men were very generous of that gift; so that at the last he had his wallet full of them, and they chinked together when he rode; and when he halted by the side of the way he would take them out and try them, till his head turned like the sails upon a windmill.

'A murrain upon this business!' said the elder son, 'for I perceive no end to it. Here I have the red, and here the blue and the green; and to me they seem all excellent, and yet shame each other. A murrain on the trade! If it were not for the King that is a priest and whom I have called my father, and if it were not for the fair maid of the dun that makes my mouth to sing and my heart enlarge, I would even tumble them all into the salt sea, and go home and be a King like other folk.'

But he was like the hunter that has seen a stag upon a mountain, so that the night may fall, and the fire be kindled and the lights shine in his house, but desire of that stag is single in his bosom.

Now after many years the elder son came upon the sides of the salt sea; and it was night, and a savage place, and the clamour of the sea was loud. There he was aware of a house, and a man that sat there by the light of a candle, for he had no fire. Now the elder son came in to him, and the man gave him water to drink, for he had no bread; and wagged his head when he was spoken to, for he had no words.

'Have you the touchstone of truth?' asked the elder son;

and when the man had wagged his head, 'I might have known that,' cried the elder son, 'I have here a wallet full of them! And with that he laughed, although his heart was weary.

And with that the man laughed too, and with the puff of his laughter the candle went out.

'Sleep,' said the man, 'for now I think you have come far enough; and your quest is ended, and my candle is out.'

Now when the morning came, the man gave him a clear pebble in his hand, and it had no beauty and no colour, and the elder son looked upon it scornfully and shook his head, and he went away, for it seemed a small affair to him.

All that day he rode, and his mind was quiet, and the desire of the chase allayed. 'How if this poor pebble be the touchstone, after all?' said he: and he got down from his horse, and emptied forth his wallet by the side of the way. Now, in the light of each other, all the touchstones lost their hue and fire and withered like stars at morning; but in the light of the pebble, their beauty remained, only the pebble was the most bright. And the elder son smote upon his brow. 'How if this be the truth?' he cried, 'that all are a little true?' And he took the pebble, and turned its light upon the heavens, and they deepened above him like the pit; and he turned it on the hills, and the hills were cold and rugged, but life ran in their sides so that his own life bounded; and he turned it on the dust, and he beheld the dust with joy and terror; and he turned it on himself, and kneeled down and prayed.

'Now thanks be to God,' said the elder son, 'I have found the touchstone; and now I may turn my reins, and ride home to the King and to the maid of the dun that makes my mouth to sing and my heart enlarge.'

Now when he came to the dun, he saw children playing by the gate where the King had met him in the old days; and this stayed his pleasure, for he thought in his heart, 'It is here my children should be playing.' And when he came into the hall, there was his brother on the high seat and the maid beside him; and at that his anger rose, for he thought in his heart, 'It is I that should be sitting there, and the maid beside me.'

'Who are you?' said his brother. 'And what make you in the dun?'

'I am your elder brother,' he replied. 'And I am come to marry the maid, for I have brought the touchstone of truth.'

Then the younger brother laughed aloud. 'Why,' said he, 'I

found the touchstone years ago, and married the maid, and there are our children playing at the gate.'

Now at this the elder brother grew as gray as the dawn. 'I pray you have dealt justly,' said he, 'for I perceive my life is lost.'

'Justly?' quoth the younger brother. 'It becomes you ill, that are a restless man and a runagate, to doubt my justice or the King my father's that are sedentary folk and known in the land.'

'Nay,' said the elder brother, 'you have all else, have patience also; and suffer me to say the world is full of touchstones, and it appears not easily which is true.'

'I have no shame of mine,' said the younger brother. 'There it is, and look in it.'

So the elder brother looked in the mirror, and he was sore amazed; for he was an old man, and his hair was white upon his head; and he sat down in the hall and wept aloud.

'Now,' said the younger brother, 'see what a fool's part you have played, that ran over all the world to seek what was lying in our father's treasury, and came back an old carle for the dogs to bark at, and without chick or child. And I that was dutiful and wise sit here crowned with virtues and pleasures, and happy in the light of my hearth.'

'Methinks you have a cruel tongue,' said the elder brother; and he pulled out the clear pebble and turned its light on his brother; and behold the man was lying, his soul was shrunk into the smallness of a pea, and his heart was a bag of little fears like scorpions, and love was dead in his bosom. And at that the elder brother cried out aloud, and turned the light of the pebble on the maid, and lo! she was but a mask of a woman, and withinsides she was quite dead, and she smiled as a clock ticks and knew not wherefore.

'Oh, well,' said the elder brother, 'I perceive there is both good and bad. So fare ye all as well as ye may in the dun; but I will go forth into the world with my pebble in my pocket.'

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## XIX.

### THE POOR THING.

THERE was a man in the islands who fished for his bare bellyful, and took his life in his hands to go forth upon the sea between four planks. But though he had much ado, he was merry of

heart ; and the gulls heard him laugh when the spray met him. And though he had little lore, he was sound of spirit ; and when the fish came to his hook in the midwaters, he blessed God without weighing. He was bitter poor in goods and bitter ugly of countenance, and he had no wife.

It fell in the time of the fishing, that the man awoke in his house about the midst of the afternoon. The fire burned in the midst, and the smoke went up and the sun came down by the chimney. And the man was aware of the likeness of one that warmed his hands at the red peats.

‘I greet you,’ said the man, ‘in the name of God.’

‘I greet you,’ said he that warmed his hands, ‘but not in the name of God, for I am none of His ; nor in the name of Hell, for I am not of Hell. For I am but a bloodless thing, less than wind and lighter than a sound, and the wind goes through me like a net, and I am broken by a sound and shaken by the cold.’

‘Be plain with me,’ said the man, ‘and tell me your name and of your nature.’

‘My name,’ quoth the other, ‘is not yet named, and my nature not yet sure. For I am part of a man ; and I was a part of your fathers, and went out to fish and fight with them in the ancient days. But now is my turn not yet come ; and I wait until you have a wife, and then shall I be in your son, and a brave part of him, rejoicing manfully to launch the boat into the surf, skilful to direct the helm, and a man of might where the ring closes and the blows are going.’

‘This is a marvellous thing to hear,’ said the man ; ‘and if you are indeed to be my son, I fear it will go ill with you ; for I am bitter poor in goods and bitter ugly in face, and I shall never get me a wife if I live to the age of eagles.’

‘All this have I come to remedy, my Father,’ said the Poor Thing ; ‘for we must go this night to the little isle of sheep, where our fathers lie in the dead-cairn, and to-morrow to the Earl’s Hall, and there shall you find a wife by my providing.’

So the man rose and put forth his boat at the time of the sun-setting ; and the Poor Thing sat in the prow, and the spray blew through his bones like snow, and the wind whistled in his teeth, and the boat dipped not with the weight of him.

‘I am fearful to see you, my son,’ said the man. ‘For methinks you are no thing of God.’

‘It is only the wind that whistles in my teeth,’ said the Poor Thing, ‘and there is no life in me to keep it out.’

So they came to the little isle of sheep, where the surf burst all about it in the midst of the sea, and it was all green with bracken, and all wet with dew, and the moon enlightened it. They ran the boat into a cove, and set foot to land; and the man came heavily behind among the rocks in the deepness of the bracken, but the Poor Thing went before him like a smoke in the light of the moon. So they came to the dead-cairn, and they laid their ears to the stones; and the dead complained withinsides like a swarm of bees: 'Time was that marrow was in our bones, and strength in our sinews; and the thoughts of our head were clothed upon with acts and the words of men. But now are we broken in sunder, and the bonds of our bones are loosed, and our thoughts lie in the dust.'

Then said the Poor Thing: 'Charge them that they give you the virtue they withheld.'

And the man said: 'Bones of my fathers, greeting! for I am sprung of your loins. And now behold I break open the piled stones of your cairn, and I let in the noon between your ribs. Count it well done, for it was to be; and give me what I come seeking in the name of blood and in the name of God.'

And the spirits of the dead stirred in the cairn like ants; and they spoke: 'You have broken the roof of our cairn and let in the noon between our ribs; and you have the strength of the still-living. But what virtue have we? what power? or what jewel here in the dust with us, that any living man should covet or receive it? for we are less than nothing. But we tell you one thing, speaking with many voices like bees, that the way is plain before all like the grooves of launching: So forth into life and fear not, for so did we all in the ancient ages.' And their voices passed away like an eddy in a river.

'Now,' said the Poor Thing, 'they have told you a lesson, but make them give you a gift. Stoop your hand among the bones without drawback, and you shall find their treasure.'

So the man stooped his hand, and the dead laid hold upon it many and faint like ants; but he shook them off, and behold, what he brought up in his hand was the shoe of a horse, and it was rusty.

'It is a thing of no price,' quoth the man, 'for it is rusty.'

'We shall see that,' said the Poor Thing; 'for in my thought it is a good thing to do what our fathers did, and to keep what they kept without question. And in my thought one thing is as good as another in this world; and a shoe of a horse will do.'

Now they got into their boat with the horseshoe, and when the dawn was come they were aware of the smoke of the Earl's town and the bells of the Kirk that beat. So they set foot to shore; and the man went up to the market among the fishers over against the palace and the Kirk; and he was bitter poor and bitter ugly, and he had never a fish to sell, but only a shoe of a horse in his creel, and it rusty.

'Now,' said the Poor Thing, 'do so and so, and you shall find a wife and I a mother.'

It befell that the Earl's daughter came forth to go into the Kirk upon her prayers, and when she saw the poor man stand in the market with only the shoe of a horse, and it rusty, it came in her mind it should be a thing of price.

'What is that?' quoth she.

'It is a shoe of a horse,' said the man.

'And what is the use of it?' quoth the Earl's daughter.

'It is for no use,' said the man.

'I may not believe that,' said she; 'else why should you carry it?'

'I do so,' said he, 'because it was so my fathers did in the ancient ages; and I have neither a better reason nor a worse.'

Now the Earl's daughter could not find it in her mind to believe him. 'Come,' quoth she, 'sell me this, for I am sure it is a thing of price.'

'Nay,' said the man, 'the thing is not for sale.'

'What!' cried the Earl's daughter. 'Then what make you here in the town's market, with the thing in your creel and nought beside?'

'I sit here,' says the man, 'to get me a wife.'

'There is no sense in any of these answers,' thought the Earl's daughter; 'and I could find it in my heart to weep.'

By came the Earl upon that; and she called him and told him all. And when he had heard, he was of his daughter's mind that this should be a thing of virtue; and charged the man to set a price upon the thing or else be hanged upon the gallows, and that was near at hand so that the man could see it.

'The way of life is straight like the grooves of launching,' quoth the man. 'And if I am to be hanged let me be hanged.'

'Why!' cried the Earl, 'will you set your neck against a shoe of a horse, and it rusty?'

'In my thought,' said the man, 'one thing is as good as another in this world; and a shoe of a horse will do.'

'This can never be,' thought the Earl, and he stood and looked upon the man, and bit his beard.

And the man looked up at him and smiled. 'It was so my fathers did in the ancient ages,' quoth he to the Earl, 'and I have neither a better reason nor a worse.'

'There is no sense in any of this,' thought the Earl, 'and I must be growing old.' So he had his daughter on one side, and says he: 'Many suitors have you denied, my child. But here is a very strange matter that a man should cling so to a shoe of a horse, and it rusty; and that he should offer it like a thing on sale, and yet not sell it; and that he should sit there seeking a wife. If I come not to the bottom of this thing, I shall have no more pleasure in bread; and I can see no way, but either I should hang or you should marry him.'

'By my troth, but he is bitter ugly,' said the Earl's daughter. 'How if the gallows be so near at hand?'

'It was not so,' said the Earl, 'that my fathers did in the ancient ages. I am like the man, and can give you neither a better reason nor a worse. But do you, prithee, speak with him again.'

So the Earl's daughter spoke to the man. 'If you were not so bitter ugly,' quoth she, 'my father the Earl would have us marry.'

'Bitter ugly am I,' said the man, 'and you as fair as May. Bitter ugly I am, and what of that? It was so my fathers . . .'

'In the name of God,' said the Earl's daughter, 'let your fathers be!'

'If I had done that,' said the man, 'you had never been chaffering with me here in the market, nor your father the Earl watching with the end of his eye.'

'But come,' quoth the Earl's daughter, 'this is a very strange thing, that you would have me wed for a shoe of a horse, and it rusty.'

'In my thought,' quoth the man, 'one thing is as good . . .'

'O, spare me that,' said the Earl's daughter, 'and tell me why I should marry.'

'Listen and look,' said the man.

Now the wind blew through the Poor Thing like an infant crying, so that her heart was melted; and her eyes were unsealed, and she was aware of the thing as it were a babe unmothered, and she took it to her arms, and it melted in her arms like the air.

'Come,' said the man, 'behold a vision of our children, the busy hearth, and the white heads. And let that suffice, for it is all God offers.'

'I have no delight in it,' said she, but with that she sighed.

'The ways of life are straight like the grooves of launching,' said the man, and he took her by the hand.

'And what shall we do with the horseshoe?' quoth she.

'I will give it to your father,' said the man; 'and he can make a Kirk and a mill of it for me.'

It came to pass in time that the Poor Thing was born, but memory of these matters slept within him, and he knew not that which he had done. But he was a part of the eldest son; rejoicing manfully to launch the boat into the surf, skilful to direct the helm, and a man of might where the ring closes and the blows are going.

## XX.

### THE SONG OF THE MORROW.

THE King of Duntrine had a daughter when he was old, and she was the fairest King's daughter between two seas; her hair was like spun gold and her eyes like pools in a river; and the King gave her a castle upon the sea beach, with a terrace, and a court of the hewn stone, and four towers at the four corners. Here she dwelt and grew up, and had no care for the morrow and no power upon the hour, after the manner of simple men.

It befell that she walked one day by the beach of the sea, when it was autumn, and the wind blew from the place of rains; and upon the one hand of her the sea beat, and upon the other the dead leaves ran. This was the loneliest beach between two seas, and strange things had been done there in the ancient ages. Now the King's daughter was aware of a crone that sat upon the beach. The sea foam ran to her feet, and the dead leaves swarmed about her back, and the rags blew about her face in the blowing of the wind.

'Now,' said the king's daughter, and she named a holy name, 'this is the most unhappy old crone between two seas.'

'Daughter of a King,' said the crone, 'you dwell in a stone house, and your hair is like the gold, but what is your profit? Life is not long, nor lives strong; and you live after the way of

simple men, and have no thought for the morrow and no power upon the hour.'

'Thought for the morrow, that I have,' said the King's daughter; 'but power upon the hour, that have I not.' And she mused with herself.

Then the crone smote her lean hands one within the other, and laughed like a seagull. 'Home,' cried she, 'O daughter of a King, home to your stone house, for the longing is come upon you now, nor can you live any more after the manner of simple men. Home, and toil and suffer, till the gift come that will make you bare, and till the man come that will bring you care.'

The King's daughter made no more ado, but she turned about and went home to her house in silence. And when she was come into her chamber she called for her nurse.

'Nurse,' said the King's daughter, 'thought is come upon me for the morrow, so that I can live no more after the manner of simple men. Tell me what I must do that I may have power upon the hour.'

Then the nurse moaned like a snow wind. 'Alas!' said she, 'that this thing should be; but the thought is gone into your marrow, nor is there any cure against the thought. Be it so, then, even as you will; though power is less than weakness, power shall you have; and though the thought is colder than winter, yet shall you think it to an end.'

So the King's daughter sat in her vaulted chamber in the masoned house, and she thought upon the thought. Nine years she sat; and the sea beat upon the terrace, and the gulls cried about the turrets, and wind crooned in the chimneys of the house. Nine years she came not abroad, nor tasted the clean air, neither saw God's sky. Nine years she sat and looked neither to the right nor to the left, nor heard speech of anyone, but thought upon the thought of the morrow. And her nurse fed her in silence, and she took of the food with her left hand and ate it without grace.

Now when the nine years were out, it fell dusk in the autumn, and there came a sound in the wind like a sound of piping. At that the nurse lifted up her finger in the vaulted house.

'I hear a sound in the wind,' said she, 'that is like the sound of piping.'

'It is but a little sound,' said the King's daughter, 'but yet is it sound enough for me.'

So they went down in the dusk to the doors of the house,

and along the beach of the sea. And the waves beat upon the one hand, and upon the other the dead leaves ran; and the clouds raced in the sky, and the gulls flew widdershins. And when they came to that part of the beach where strange things had been done in the ancient ages, lo, there was the crone, and she was dancing widdershins.

‘What makes you dance widdershins, old crone?’ said the King’s daughter, ‘here upon the bleak beach between the waves and the dead leaves?’

‘I hear a sound in the wind that is like a sound of piping,’ quoth she. ‘And it is for that that I dance widdershins. For the gift comes that will make you bare, and the man comes that must bring you care. But for me the morrow is come that I have thought upon, and the hour of my power.’

‘How comes it, crone,’ said the King’s daughter, ‘that you waver like a rag, and pale like a dead leaf before my eyes?’

‘Because the morrow has come that I have thought upon, and the hour of my power,’ said the crone, and she fell on the beach, and lo! she was but stalks of the sea tangle, and dust of the sea sand, and the sand lice hopped upon the place of her.

‘This is the strangest thing that befell between two seas,’ said the King’s daughter of Duntrine.

But the nurse broke out and moaned like an autumn gale. ‘I am weary of the wind,’ quoth she, and she bewailed her day.

The King’s daughter was aware of a man upon the beach, he went hooded so that none might perceive his face; and a pipe was underneath his arm. The sound of his pipe was like singing wasps and like the wind that sings in windlestraw; and it took hold upon men’s ears like the crying of gulls.

‘Are you the comer?’ quoth the King’s daughter of Duntrine.

‘I am the come,’ said he, ‘and these are the pipes that a man may hear, and I have power upon the hour, and this is the song of the morrow.’ And he piped the song of the morrow, and it was as long as years, and the nurse wept out aloud at the hearing of it.

‘This is true,’ said the King’s daughter, ‘that you pipe the song of the morrow; but that ye have power upon the hour, how may I know that? Show me a marvel here upon the beach between the waves and the dead leaves.’

And the man said, ‘Upon whom?’

‘Here is my nurse,’ quoth the King’s daughter. ‘She is weary of the wind. Show me a good marvel upon her.’

And lo the nurse fell upon the beach as it were two handfuls of dead leaves, and the wind whirled them widdershins, and the sand lice hopped between.

'It is true,' said the King's daughter of Duntrine; 'you are the comer, and you have power upon the hour. Come with me to my stone house.'

So they went by the sea margin, and the man piped the song of the morrow, and the leaves followed behind them as they went. Then they sat down together; and the sea beat on the terrace, and the gulls cried about the towers, and the wind crooned in the chimneys of the house. Nine years they sat, and every year when it fell autumn, the man said, 'This is the hour, and I have power in it,' and the daughter of the King said, 'Nay, but pipe me the song of the morrow.' And he piped it, and it was long like years.

Now when the nine years were gone, the King's daughter of Duntrine got her to her feet, like one that remembers; and she looked about her in the masoned house; and all her servants were gone; only the man that piped sat upon the terrace with the hand upon his face, and as he piped the leaves ran about the terrace and the sea beat along the wall. Then she cried to him with a great voice, 'This is the hour, and let me see the power of it.' And with that the wind blew off the hand from the man's face, and lo, there was no man there, only the clothes and the hand and the pipes tumbled one upon another in a corner of the terrace, and the dead leaves ran over them.

And the King's daughter of Duntrine got her to that part of the beach where strange things had been done in the ancient ages, and there she sat her down. The sea foam ran to her feet, and the dead leaves swarmed about her back, and the veil blew about her face in the blowing of the wind. And when she lifted up her eyes, there was the daughter of a King come walking on the beach. Her hair was like the spun gold, and her eyes like pools in a river, and she had no thought for the morrow and no power upon the hour, after the manner of simple men.

R. L. STEVENSON.

## *Recollections of a Piano.*

CHIFFONIER, your memory's failing—  
 You are older than I am.  
 In the days long past bewailing,  
 You held gingerbread and jam,  
 Almonds, oranges, and spices,  
 All as good as they could be ;  
 Tiny plates with quaint devices  
 For the children's Sunday tea.

Chiffonier, of all your treasures,  
 You retain no mouldy crumb,  
 And I've lost my sweet old measures,  
 And my keys are chiefly dumb ;  
 Yet, when many memories mingle,  
 Sometimes, in the dead of night,  
 With a faint, unearthly jingle,  
 I awaken in affright.

Voices lost to mortal hearing  
 Murmur softly in the gloom.  
 There are children's faces peering  
 From the shadows of the room ;  
 And I feel my faded curtain  
 Softly lifted. Who are *these* ?  
 No chord sounds, yet I am certain  
 There are fingers on my keys—

*They* for whom a tall wax candle  
 In each polished sconce was set—  
 Singing Purcell, Bach, and Handel,  
 Many a stately, staid duet.

They were tenor and soprano ;  
Pleasantly their voices rang—  
No one but the old piano  
Can remember what they sang !

Winter seems an earlier comer,  
Yet some days of warmth we win ;  
Through the window, in the summer,  
Looks the white Cape jessamine.  
Has the old plant ever spoken  
Of the sprays that once were laid  
On my shining cover oaken—  
And she found them when she played ?

On the lawn I still look over—  
Where a footstep seldom falls—  
There were joyous cries of ' Rover !'  
There were clashing croquet-balls.  
Dull and deaf the Chiffonier is,  
And he sleeps the whole day long ;  
But the old piano wearies  
For the laughter and the song.

I am battered, I am dusty,  
And my silk is dark with mould ;  
No one rubs my sconces rusty,  
Tarnished now, that shone like gold !  
The last breath of life is dwindling  
From my numb and voiceless keys.  
They may break me up for kindling  
Just as quickly as they please.

MAY KENDALL.

## *A Correspondent of White of Selborne.<sup>1</sup>*

IT is impossible to read any collection of letters written by eminent men of the last century without being struck with amazement at the dulness of the correspondents upon whom these literary treasures were lavished. Could anything be more tiresome, according to our ideas, than the prosy, long-winded effusions of Mann and Mason, occasionally printed as foot-notes to some edition of Walpole or Gray?—yet Walpole and Mann corresponded without even meeting for forty-four years. In reading the Mulso letters it does not at first sight seem that White 'of Selborne' was more fortunate than his contemporaries. His life-long and devoted friend had not the gift of letter-writing. He is trivial, without the art of making his trivialities amusing; he is apt to repeat himself and to gush, and has even been known to strive after jokes of a doubtful sort; yet in spite of all this, the friendship between the two men never flagged, and the letters, like all things relating to a bygone day, have an interest of their own quite apart from any literary merit.

John Mulso, whose unpublished letters to White extend over half a century (1744–1790), was one of the men best known and described by their relationship to somebody else. He was, emphatically, 'the brother of Mrs. Chapone,' the '*alter ego* of Gilbert White.' Yet his capacity for hero-worship, and enthusiasm for those whose abilities were more brilliant than his own, earned him a lasting place in the affections of the leading literary men of the latter half of the eighteenth century. Not that Mulso was at all a stupid man. He had cultivated tastes of all kinds, was fond of pictures, spent a good deal of time in reading, and had a keener perception of the beauties of architecture and the charms of moorland scenery than was common in his day. He was simply a man without initiative power or much originality, and he lacked the subtle gift of expression that makes a good letter-writer.

<sup>1</sup> From a collection of MS. letters, written by the Rev. John Mulso to White of Selborne, now in the possession of the Earl of Stamford.

Now, there are two reasons which induce us to read old letters ; one is the intrinsic interest present in many of them, and the other is the light that they throw on contemporary life. And, in many cases, the smaller the amount of literary ability the greater is the value of the unconscious revelations.

If John Mulso has done nothing else to deserve our gratitude, he at least has shown how very erroneous are the conceptions of many people on the subject of the clergy of the last century. The common idea of a parson in the days of the Georges is either a gentle, illiterate being, who is vicar of a country parish and goes his sleepy, kindly way ; a broken-down drudge ; a boorish farmer ; a snuffy chaplain. John Mulso resembles in nothing either Goldsmith's country parson or the husband of *Beatrice Esmond*. In fact, there is but little to distinguish him from the parish clergyman of our own day. Instead of marrying the waiting maid, and being sent out before the pudding, John Mulso comes of a good middle-class family, associates with the neighbouring gentry on equal terms, and has the ordinary education of a gentleman. At Oxford he makes many friends—Gilbert White, elected to an Oriel Fellowship in 1744, the two Wartons, and Collins, the poet, being the most celebrated. He watched with interest the struggle of the last three against the wide-spread influence of Pope, and their efforts, successful in the long run, to found a Mediæval, or Romantic, School. They held, as Joseph Warton, the future head master of Winchester, pertinently observed, that 'invention and imagination were the chief faculties of a poet,' and that a sermon was as much out of place in poetry as poetry in a sermon. At first a howl of indignation, which sounds strange to our ears, greeted the attempt to place Pope in a lower rank than Shakespeare, Spenser, or Milton, and even Johnson felt some satisfaction that Warton 'could not persuade the world to be of his opinion' ; but men's eyes had been opened and blindness was no longer possible. The 'romantic' revolt had been greatly helped forward by Warton's younger brother Thomas, author of the '*History of Poetry*,' and successively Professor of Poetry and Poet Laureate (1785), and by Collins, who, according to Gray, formed Thomas Warton's natural complement. 'Each,' he says in his letters, 'is the half of a considerable man, and one the counterpart of the other. The first (Collins) has but little invention, is very poetical, has much choice of expression, and a good ear. The second, a fine fancy modelled on the antique, a bad ear, great variety of words and images, with no choice at all.'

But if the Wartons passed through life with credit to themselves, 'poor dear Collins,' as Johnson calls him, was unlucky from the beginning. The habit of mind which forced him constantly to plan books and seldom write them, showed itself in other and more serious ways. 'Collins has been some time returned from Flanders,' writes Mulso to White on September 7, 1745, 'in order to put on the gown, as I hear, and get a chaplaincy in a regiment. Don't laugh,' he adds pathetically. 'I don't on these occasions,' and indeed the case was serious enough. Eight months later (May 28, 1746) Mulso writes again: 'Collins appears in good cloaths and a wretched carcass at all gay places, though it was with the utmost difficulty that he and I scraped together 5*l.* for Miss Bundy, at whose suit he was arrested, and whom, by his own confession, he never intended to pay. I don't believe he will tell the story in verse, though some circumstances of his taking would be burlesque enough. The bailiff introduced himself with four gentlemen who came to drink tea, and who altogether could raise but one guinea.'

With Collins, as with many other gifted men, the *dégringolade*, once begun, went on with fearful rapidity. It is only seven years after the date of Mulso's letter that Johnson, who was always fond of Collins and invariably kind to him, writes to Joseph Warton on the same subject: 'I think of him as he was a few years back, full of hopes and projects, versed in many languages, high in fancy, with a busy and forcible mind; now, labouring under that depression which enchains the faculties without destroying them.' Everything was done that affection or science could suggest. Foreign travel was called to their aid to exercise a stimulating influence, but it proved as useless as all other remedies, and after a short time spent in an asylum, Collins was removed to his sister's care at Chichester, where his clouded life soon after came to a close.

Passing references are made in Mulso's letters to 'that agreeable Toad Carter,' Tom Manders, and 'dear Jack Rudge,' but all his affection is centred on Gilbert White, to whom, to say the truth, he must have been rather a bore. His letters teem with protestations, with entreaties for a visit from White, with apologies and regrets for inability on his own part to stay with White, either at Faringdon or Selborne, wherever the naturalist happened to be curate; and his reproaches when White inadvertently begins a letter 'dear Sir' instead of 'dear Mulso,' sound as if they had dropped from the pen of a missish young lady. So much is

known about White of Selborne, his work, and his charming personality, that it is not necessary to add anything here. After Mulso left Oxford the two friends necessarily saw each other much less frequently, though White was adopted into the hearts of the entire Mulso family, of Tom and his fiancée, Miss Prescott or 'Pressy,' of Ned the youngest son, and of the lively Hester or Heck, Richardson's critic, admirer, and correspondent. John Mulso was very fond and proud of his sister, who was a beautiful artist, a fair musician, a novelist—at nine years old—the mistress of several languages, an excellent housekeeper, and a passionate lover of races and balls. From repeated entreaties in the earlier letters that White would not play 'with the tangles of Neëra's hair,' but would keep himself fancy free, we may guess that perhaps Mulso indulged himself in the hope of bringing about a marriage between his friend and his sister, but White never married, and Hecky blossomed into 'the admirable Mrs. Chapone.'

For some time Mulso seems to have led a roving existence of an innocent and agreeable kind. On July 18, 1744, he writes to White from Leeds Abbey, Kent, at that period inhabited by a Mrs. Meredith, and his letter gives an interesting sketch of a prosperous country house in the middle of the eighteenth century. The large apartments are 'neatly furnished,' and the gallery above seventy feet long, 'filled with family pictures, of which (he goes on to say) there is not one tolerable to a man of your gusto; a large garden, well stocked with fruit, and adorned with fountains, cascades, and canals; a most romantic wood behind it with large fishponds; large stables, with a compleat set of foaming horses for a coach that has a prodigious easy corner, and riding nags that I am in love with. But, oh! Gil, here is a loss the most severe that can be, this house had a fine library, which, not falling by will to the lady of it, has been sold off, and nothing remains but the skeleton cases.'

In spite of the bare shelves and skeleton cases, Mulso seems to have passed his time with great satisfaction to himself. A month later we find that he has been 'for ever in the corners of coaches' of a less 'prodigious easy' kind than Mrs. Meredith's, on his way to some festivity; that he thinks the ladies of Canterbury 'insufferably handsome,' and that 'no character can possibly be so shocking' as Shylock performed by Macklin. Notices of public events are almost as rare in Mulso's correspondence as they would be in those of his great-grandchildren; even the rebellion in the North only calls forth the casual remark that White, who

is staying near Peterborough, is 'nearer the Rebels than his friend in London,' and probably knows more about the subject. His indifference to the issue seems complete, and neither 'wars nor rumours of wars' find any place in his closely written pages. Even the French Revolution and the taking of the Bastille pass unnoticed. The appearance of Marshal Belle-Isle in the Hampton Court Gardens in August 1746, merely gives rise to reflections as to the cause of the universal desire to see great men, and the conclusion that for his part he mostly prefers their work to their personality. Yet at that date, when foreigners were still a rarity, curiosity might have been pardonable concerning such an eminent prisoner who had been captured in such a daring and romantic way, on his journey from Cassel to Berlin, eighteen months before. Carlyle tells us that after his seizure on a tiny bit of Hanoverian territory, where he had halted, the Marshal was brought to Windsor in February 1745 and set free the following August; but as Mulso, writing at the time, gives the date of Belle-Isle's walk in Hampton Court, in company with the Duke of Grafton, as August 1746, we may conclude that the historian had made a slip of the pen, and put one year for another.

Perhaps the love of gardens may have been caught from White, but certainly the passion existed strongly in Mulso, though he hardly seems to have been very successful as a gardener. 'I have seen no pictures since I was at Windsor with you,' he observes (September 7, 1745), 'but I have been at the Duke of Argyll's, and dined in his gardens. They are a Treasury of Exotics, and this is their chief beauty. Mr. Pelham's House and gardens have nothing in them that struck me much; the house is an addition to an old gate left by Cardinal Wolsey, and is in the old taste, which I don't like as well as the modern, though I would not have you tell your Uncle Snooke so.' The 'Treasury of Exotics' belonging to the Duke of Argyll was most probably the conservatory of Whitton, near Hounslow, and, unlike modern conservatories, was so well and firmly built that it did not require much alteration to turn it into a mansion house, and since that time it has been regularly inhabited.

The first hint we get of Mulso being appointed to a cure is in May 1746, but the earliest letter written from Sunbury (of which he was made vicar) was in August 1747, and he seems to have 'served' that parish in connection with Hampton. Up to that time he appears to have taken holiday and lived partly with his family and partly with his friends, with White at their head.

One of these little tours, taken in company with his father, to Sir John Dolben's, Northamptonshire, lets in a curious light on the manner in which cultivated country people passed their days, and may be compared with the mode of life inaugurated about thirty years later by the Duc and Duchesse de Choiseul at their country house of Chanteloup. 'We rose every morning between seven and eight, took a walk, or went a-coursing; returned to breakfast between nine and ten, after which a concert of musick of eight hands; went to Church at eleven, where a new organ had just been put up; more music; dinner at two, when there is constantly ten good dishes; walked or rode till tea-time; more music; prayers at eight; then to supper of seven dishes, and sat laughing till near twelve in a little parlour.' Now, if we substitute the word 'dinner' for 'supper,' and 'lunch' for 'dinner,' the hours are exactly those of most houses at the present time, and it is a comfort to feel that the present generation has not fallen away from the Spartan virtue of their ancestors so far as is generally supposed. Yet in this simple catalogue of *faits et gestes* there is one point that will strike everybody. Mulso is not speaking of a Sunday, but expressly says 'every morning' he did these things. It is not the custom in modern country houses to turn out as a matter of course to daily prayers; so in this circumstance, as in many others, Mulso upsets completely our preconceived ideas as to the views and habits of our forefathers.

The elder Mulso was a genial man of enlarged mind, who welcomed his son's friends and saw a good deal of the most interesting society of the day at his own house. Garrick, Quin and Mrs. Cibber are once mentioned as being at tea, and about 1750, the exact date is uncertain, the Mulsos 'got into the acquaintance of Richardson, a sort of an original for goodness and respectability.' Although John Mulso's residence in his various country parishes rendered it impossible that he should be often in Richardson's company, he was kept well posted up in all the celebrated author's writings and opinions by his future sister-in-law, 'Pressy' (or Miss Prescott) and Heck Mulso, who formed part of the admiring circle at North End. 'He is in person,' says Mulso soon after his first introduction, 'a short, fat man, of an honest countenance, but has ill-health and shattered nerves. But his gentle manners, his general charitableness, his extreme tenderness to every proper object that comes within his notice, make him infinitely dear to those who know him and studiously sought after by those who do not.'

The acquaintance was all the more gratifying to Mulso because, ever since the publication of 'Clarissa,' he had, like the rest of the world, felt the deepest admiration for the author. Indeed, he had even gone the length of writing a poem on the subject, which he sends to White, remarking that he 'never hit off anything with such ease and satisfaction.' It is not every one who will share his feelings of complacency. The poem is rather involved, and beyond the fact that it challenges a comparison between Clarissa's forlorn condition and the Children of Israel on the banks of Kedar, it is not always possible to make out what it is all about. The versification is of the fashion of the day, and abounds in images and allegory. No man with a sense of humour could have written it, and any man with a sense of humour would have found it very difficult to read such lines as the following with the seriousness demanded by their author:—

O Richardson, if ought beneath those fires  
Which in wrapt souls th' immediate God inspires,  
'Tis sure the vigour of thy moving page  
Can touch, reform, and save a vitious age :  
No bigot zeal raves in each threatening line  
But all Ezekiel's tenderness is thine.

This, is perhaps, the first time that 'tenderness' has been pointed out as the special attribute of Ezekiel !

It is never definitely stated when Mulso became engaged to Miss Young, but he refers to 'you know who' as far back as 1747, though the marriage only took place in May 1756. We are not told what caused the delay, but it seems to have been borne by both parties with equanimity. They saw each other when they could at the houses of some of their relations; in London, at Sunbury or at Rickmansworth, 'where it is not safe to ride without a servant, and where not a horse can pass for half a mile together and a carriage may run upon you without being able to help it.' The relations between the *fiancés* were far less strict than is commonly supposed to have been customary, and when, in 1755, Mulso has a bad attack of illness, it is considered quite a matter of course that Miss Young should nurse him back to health and 'keep his room cool and his person sweet by giving him clean linnen and open windows.' Mulso was never a strong man, nor, according to him, was anybody else, but though he certainly was not a grumbler, he habitually saw everything *en noir*. In the eighteenth century (if we may judge from his

letters) the rainfall must have been nearly equal to that of Chirra, Punji, and every rose that forced its way into blossom was an *enfant du miracle*. Then his friends, as well as himself, invariably are the victims of ill-health,—‘we are a set of crocks’ is an expression he often uses, and it will come as a surprise to all who imagine the word a piece of modern slang. Yet he does not make a fuss about his ailments, and is quite ready to take an interest in outside things and to make the best of his enforced periods of confinement.

When he is a bachelor he plays battledore and shuttlecock with Heck, and when he is a married man he ‘takes up cards, or the boxes of the Sounding Gammon’ with his wife. He keeps up his classics and his reading, though he finds it impossible, at any rate for a long while, to get hold of the ‘Odyssey.’ He watches eagerly for the publication of his friend’s books and gives minute criticisms of them. He even conducts his wife to the British Museum (1758), which he considers ‘royal’ in itself and ‘grand and delightful’ as to prospect. It is curious to find him adding that White, who had had ‘the supervisal of the Bodleian Library,’ would ‘perhaps think 50,000 printed volumes but a private collection, but there are besides about five rooms full of MSS. and four or five rooms where the virtuoso and the naturalist have high enjoyment of samples in this way.’ Could any mortal undertake to guess how many millions of books are now contained in that labyrinth of galleries?

For three and a half years after his marriage John Mulso lived quietly at Sunbury with his wife and little girl, who ‘by a significant leer in her eye, promised to be droll.’ Then a change came over his life, by the offer of the living of Thornhill, near Wakefield, which was in the gift of Sir George Savill. Mulso hesitated for some time, as at that period Yorkshire was practically as distant as the Faroe Islands are now, but in the end he decided on acceptance. The living, we learn, was nominally worth 400*l.* a year, but ‘so loaded with chapells’ that he fears ‘it is not so much in income.’ This for a country living was a fair stipend. A short time after, when there is a question of White’s brother taking the cure of Blackburn, it is considered fairly paid at the rate of 250*l.* a year; in the case of a non-resident rector, two curates at 40*l.* a year were (at the express desire of the parishioners) to be provided out of that sum.

No such difficulties, however, arose about Mulso. He had every intention of residing in his parish and being a ‘jolly dog,’

which in his case meant a little hunting and coursing and a great deal of gardening. Mrs. Mulso's equivalents for these pursuits were races and balls, in which her guests joined her. The 400*l.* a year seems to have been as elastic as the proverbial bull's hide, for Mulso had a well-stocked garden and well-filled stables, four maid-servants, two men in livery, and a gardener. Perhaps Mrs. Mulso may have possessed some private fortune, but any way their income proved sufficient, and no mention is ever made as to debt.

It was in April 1767 that Mulso was appointed to Witney, near Oxford, and three years after offered a prebend's stall at Winchester. This stall he appears to have held till his death (1791), but the distance between Winchester and Witney proving inconvenient, he exchanged his country living for that of Meonstoke, seventeen miles from Alton, and comparatively close at hand.

In all these changes it is interesting to note various little details of habits and prices, insignificant in themselves, but always curious when compared with those of the present day. In a letter dated June 24, 1765, Mulso calls on White to applaud his sister, Mrs. Chapone's courage in setting out alone from London and being hurried away in chance company in the Leeds machine. 'This machine comes to Wakefield about seven in the evening of the second day. The charge is about 2*l.* 5*s.* (nowadays a first-class ticket is 24*s.*), and the expense on the road very little, because you have but little time to stop.' No wonder, after such journeys, that visits were long, as it was not worth incurring such fatigue and expense for less than six weeks or two months, and poor Heck was forced to go alone as she had no one to travel with. Her husband, Mr. Chapone, whom she had married rather against her father's wishes in 1761, only lived a few months, and her old friend 'Pressy,' who was 'a little of the prude and a little of the delicate,' had been united to Tom Mulso, and was now, as John would have said, 'a crock' and 'in an ugly way.' Heck's high spirits must have been considerably toned down by grief, but she was as popular as ever, and sought refuge from her troubles in literature. In spite of her love of races and balls, she had cultivated serious studies in a manner unusual in her time, when a sharp line was generally drawn between the butterfly and the blue-stocking. At twenty-three she had four 'billets' accepted by Johnson for the 'Rambler,' while her controversy with Richardson on parental authority had drawn on her the eyes of many distinguished men. Her odes were well known in literary circles,

and after her widowhood she brought out a series of letters for the benefit of her niece, Jenny Mulso, which were presented by Queen Charlotte to the Princess Royal. Mrs. Chapone was a thoroughly genial woman, a favourite with all, and her 'prodigious ugliness,' as Wraxall calls it did not in the least affect her charm. Her brothers were all devoted to her, and her only difficulty was to divide her time among the various houses that clamoured for her. She was a woman without enemies and highly appreciative of other people. Even Miss Burney, who was not specially ecstatic over her fellow-authoresses, allows that (notwithstanding her ugliness) she was 'the most superiorly unaffected creature you can conceive,' and Mrs. Delany, of whom she did a beautiful portrait, was her friend until death parted them.

So to Thornhill Mrs. Chapone came and was welcomed with enthusiasm by all the family. We can fancy her putting aside her own sorrows to cheer up poor Mrs. Mulso, who was just recovering from a bad illness, and entertaining her with the last gossip from the literary world of London. Hecky's acquaintance with race-courses would enable her to enter with interest into the question of her brother John's horses—always a tremendous subject of discussion in his letters to White—and no doubt her quick-sightedness and practical good sense rendered her advice in this, as in other cases, worth having. We may picture her weighing the prospective advantages of taking a footman with 10*l.* a year, 'no vails, but washed at home,' or giving lower wages, and leaving him to pick up what he could (probably no inconsiderable sum) from his master's guests. Her opinion was certain to be asked about the cost of the garden, and the gardener, who had accepted 24*l.* a year, and was to find a bed and necessary seeds out of that; and she would be consulted as to how China asters were likely to flourish in the climate of the North, and whether it would not be better to give up the attempt to grow laurestinus and take to box instead. They may even have looked forward a few years and begun to think of the expense of Master Jack's schooling, and where it would be best to send him—if Mr. Willis's school in Hampshire is likely to prove convenient and suitable by the time Jack is old enough to go to it, and if by that period his terms of 16*l.* per annum will probably be increased. What a prosperous thing coach-building has become, and how impossible it is to get a chaise built nowadays under 70*l.*! These and other kindred topics were discussed at the quarter-past-nine breakfast and the three o'clock dinner, not forgetting, we may be sure, the chances

of White's being appointed to a living, and the comfort it was that all bishops did not hold the unreasonable views of 'my Lord of Exeter,' who had made himself highly unpopular by obliging his clergy to reside in their parishes, whether they had a house or no.

Interested though he might be in gardening and moorland scenery, there is no doubt that Mulso felt Yorkshire to be something of a banishment, and he was delighted to find himself once more in the familiar shades of Hampshire, with Winchester as his metropolis. Mulso dearly loved the old city with which his life was mixed up; where he records his wife's death in his last letter to White, dated December 15, 1790; where he himself died during the following year, and where his daughter Jenny was married to the Rev. B. Jeffreys, one of the masters of the school; and at Winchester, as far as his health allowed, he was destined to pass some happy and peaceful years. He takes a fatherly pride in the way that his children 'shone' in the deanery theatricals, and hopes that White will publish an answer to the later chapters in Gibbon's history. He knows that his friend will be interested in the fact that Jack has shot a stint or summer snipe at Oxford, and recalls the good old winter days, now forty years ago, when the snipe-shooting at Oxford was some of the best in England. He always lived on excellent terms with his children, and except for his natural resentment at the drastic measures taken by his youthful son Bill to force his father to allow him to enter the Navy, he has little to complain of in their conduct. Then, as now, men liked to see their wives and daughters look their best, though they gibed at the 'large trunks' with which the ladies travelled; and then, as now, young people who stayed at balls till four o'clock 'took it out' in the morning. In all respects John Mulso seems to have been a pleasant, easy-going man, *facile à vivre*, and in no way in advance of his generation. His views upon pluralism, quoted above, were the views of other men of his time, and his attitude towards the question of the election to scholarships and fellowships not at all in advance of other people's. His letters to White teem with requests to use his influence on behalf of some friend's friend, so as to ensure his appointment to some piece of College preferment; and the research of endowment pursued in this particular manner is, unluckily, by no means a thing of the past. But one fallacy of universal belief was too much for Mulso, and that was the craze—as widespread then as it is now—for labelling aches and pains of every kind with the name

of influenza. 'We have many ill here,' he writes to White from Winchester, on June 2, 1782, 'but we have learnt the name of the *influenza* from London, where it was once used before. I do not find that the complaint here had any other appearances than a feverish cold, which naturally operated differently on different constitutions, so they called it a fever and ague and let it pass. But now we have all a dread of the influenza. My Hester has got a bad cough and cold, and the Chancellor has a sore throat. We can give some guess at the causes, but it *must* be extraordinary and go by the new name.'

With these words of wisdom our brief sketch of Mulso must close. As we have said, he was a very average Englishman—sensible, intelligent, and kindly, without much humour, or what was then called 'quickness of parts,' not perhaps finely gifted with tact, but the most faithful of friends, steady and true, through evil report and good report; a man whom it was better to live with than to meet out at dinner, and also a man of whom we make sure that he did good to all within his reach, and harm to no one.

L. B. LANG.

## *The New Centurion.*

A TALE OF AUTOMATIC WAR.

### TO THE READER.

MANY years ago the writer of these pages first conceived the idea that, as the heavy guns of a modern ironclad were, and must ever be, her decisive weapons, the chief thing to be attended to was to increase their rate and precision of fire, and that the power requisite for this purpose could readily and economically be obtained from the guns' recoil. Further it occurred to him that this might enable the crew to be withdrawn from the vicinity of the guns, and the weight of the necessary armour protection to be greatly reduced.

Ideas of this sort were taken up at intervals as the amusement of idle hours, but it was long before they assumed any definite shape, and longer still before any notion was entertained of bringing them to any serious or practical conclusion.

Meanwhile a great development took place in quick-firing guns of smaller calibre, a development which has not as yet been attended by any corresponding development in the means of protecting the men working them. The urgent need of some such protection was forcibly pointed out by Mr. Arnold Foster in his well-known work, *In a Conning Tower*; but he gave no indication of the direction in which this protection was to be sought. In reading that work it struck the writer that the requisite protection could not be obtained from armour without exceeding the available limit of weight, that the only means of affording it was to enable the sailor to find shelter in water as the soldier does in earth, and that this was an additional reason for the use of automatic artillery.

But when Mr. Arnold Foster wrote, the need of protection, though urgent, was as nothing to what it has since become. In 1891 'high explosives' were known indeed, but their poisonous

effect was not appreciated; subsequently it was recognised that the fumes of modern shell were at least as dangerous as the splinters, and indeed more so, for shields and casemates might afford some protection against the splinters, but would be useless against the fumes. Here, again, it seemed that the notion of the shelter-trench was the only adequate solution of the problem.

Still the writer hesitated to publish his views without first knowing that an automatic heavy gun was not only desirable but possible, and he probably would have kept his ideas to himself if they had not almost by accident been communicated to a professional friend, under whose guidance they quickly assumed a very different and far more practical shape.

As soon as the design was fairly complete there was no longer any reason for silence, and accordingly an article was published in the *Contemporary Review* of last September, which evoked the not unnatural query what fighting with automatic weapons would be like. In order to answer this question the first thing to be done was to put some limit on the inquiry; otherwise any attempt to answer it would be sure to end in describing one of those mythical contests between an unheard-of ironclad and an equally unheard-of enemy of which we have too many already, and from which nothing ever has been learnt or ever will be. And the best mode of confining the inquiry within some definite limits seemed to be to take some one modern ship of acknowledged excellence, to rearm her with the proposed weapons, and then to imagine her engaged with other ships equally modern, but of various types. This method the writer has attempted to pursue in the following pages, which he puts forward in the hope that they may meet with the indulgence of the reader.

It only remains to apologise to all interested in the various ships mentioned for the liberties taken with their names, and above all to the captain and officers of H.M.S. *Centurion* and to the Chief Constructor by whom she was designed.

## LETTER I.

*Centurion*, Portsmouth.

I got down safely, but feeling very weak and ill. My old servant met me at the station; he was better than I, but still it was all that we could do between us to get safely on board. I reported myself duly to our new captain, whom I have always heard of as a smart and able man, rather a Tartar, as strict with others as he is with himself; but to me he was all kindness. He

saw that I was ill and, first of all, pressed me to go on the sick list, and then, when I would not do this, he said : ' Well, you may persist as much as you like ; but, at least, you cannot complain of special and easy duty. I have to command what is really a new craft, rebuilt in consequence of your fight with the *Rurik*. I have got before me the ideas of the designers and the Admiralty, but I have not got before me any graphic statement of what actually happened, though that is clearly the basis of the whole thing. You saw it, and, if fame speaks truly, you contributed not a little to the result ; before you go on any other duty you shall put before me a full account of what you saw until you lost your senses. Mind—of what you saw—not of what the ship did, I know enough of that. And mind also—you do not begin to-day.'

So having nothing else to do I am writing these lines. Verily the skipper may well say that she is a new craft ; she was terribly wrecked, as we all know, but in the dockyard she seems to have been rebuilt from stem to stern. I have not yet made out what has been done, but I soon shall know ; if a comfortable ward-room is anything, we certainly have got that.

## LETTER II.

*Centurion, Spithead.*

You see that we are out of harbour, and whether it is that, or the rest, or whatever it may be, I am wonderfully stronger. I wrote my account for the Captain, making it exactly what he said—an account of what I saw. I related how we came into action ; how we began with the heavy guns at long range ; how little effect was produced on either side ; how by degrees we closed and the secondary armament began to tell ; how little direct injury was done by the enemy's 6-in. guns and how terrible was the indirect injury. Then I gave him an impression, as accurate as I could, of the effect of that indirect injury on our crew : how our men fell in scores, mostly untouched by iron but simply poisoned—lying in heaps, still and quiet, as if in sleep, the pallid faces and blue lips only showing the work of the deadly melinite fumes. Then I told how C—— and I worked the two barbettes. How C—— fared I did not know, but I did know and told the fearful work of laying the guns in those shields (open though they were), under the maddening thirst and swimming vision and reeling senses produced by that horrible poisoning. The end I did not know ; somehow it had been all right, for while I wrote C—— was

sitting at my elbow, and the refitted *Ruric* was lying just between us and Whale Island.

By the time I had finished we were under way for our anchorage outside the bar, and being not yet on duty, and having nothing else to do I inspected the ship thoroughly. And in good truth she is a 'new *Centurion*,' for there is little or nothing of the old ship about her. Her old boilers have been taken out and replaced by new water-tube boilers, and her engines improved to match; she is said to log her nineteen knots easily now. Her old 12" and 4" belts have been taken off, and in their place she has a belt of a uniform thickness of 8" Harveyed steel. Inside this there has been built a sort of turtle-back over her engines, boilers, and magazines, but it is not a turtle-back exactly, for two reasons. First, it does not come quite to the sides, the space left affording room for excellent shoots between the upper and lower bunkers, so that we shall have no trouble about getting the coal to the furnaces. These shoots are fitted with watertight doors that are said to close tight and not to jam with the coal; it seems impossible, but the chief engineer tells me that he has tried them repeatedly, and made quite sure of it. The second curious thing is that over the passage between the longitudinal bulkheads there is no armour at all: the turtle-back, instead of being continuous, is as it were split open, and turned up into two solid combings along the line of the bulkheads, which are carried up above these combings as far as the main-deck. The passage itself, instead of having two decks, has three, the lowest of all being a magazine deck, that immediately above it being fitted with electric gear which I could not make out, while above this again is a mere grating clear of fittings, but communicating with the upper works by broad and easy stairs. Forward and aft are of course the barbettes. I could see at once that they had been rebuilt and were smaller at the base than they had been, but what further change had been made I had not time to make out. One thing is obvious to anybody who steps on our spar-deck, and this is that our old 29-ton guns are gone, and that in their place we have two pairs of much longer and heavier pieces, presumably the new 46-ton guns. And another thing is equally obvious, which is, that they have made a clean sweep of every other gun on board—guns, casemates, shields and all, and in their place have given us an array of Maxims, 3-prs. and 12-prs., without any sort of protection whatsoever. Even our old military masts have gone; and in their place we have two light masts, not very unlike those of a Castle

liner, with three Maxims in each top, but no shields. I cannot make out the policy of this at all; probably I soon shall get some light on it, for as I was studying the Maxims on the spar deck the Captain came on deck, and seeing me thanked me for my report, saying that it was exactly what he wanted. He asked me to go through it with him carefully to-night, so I may learn what all this means.

LETTER III.

*Centurion, Plymouth.*

We had a splendid run down Channel in lovely weather, our new machinery working beautifully. We have been constantly at quarters, and are shaking down very comfortably together.

But to go on where I left off. I spent a very pleasant and instructive evening with the Captain and the Commander over my report. They both of them made merry over my realistic style, which they said was worthy of Zola himself, but the Captain added that it afforded precisely that key to the constructor's policy which he wanted. Himself he had never seen the effect of a sustained and superior fire of modern quick-firing weapons—at least in the way of enduring it. His own experience had been gained in cruisers against more lightly armed enemies, and he said that my account gave him exactly that idea of the utter impossibility of standing up to a secondary armament against a superior fire which he had previously failed to realise. He had appreciated the direct, but not the indirect, effects of such a fire, and in particular the terrible poison of the melinite fumes between decks had never really come home to him. At this I ventured to say that it would be more difficult to stand up to our new Maxims, and in addition to this they would not be so efficient as the old 4.7" guns. The Commander asked if I had gone into their electric gear. I said that I had not; I had only had time when I had finished my report to note the main features of the alterations made in the ship, but not to study the mass of new details. Then said the Captain, 'You noted those decks or flats along the passage between the central bulkheads? Well, in close action the bulk of the ship's company is to be there, and from there the Maxims are to be fought by electric gear. Until I read your report this evening it has been a hateful notion: I have been trained a seaman, and my fighting—such as I have seen—has been in daylight and open air. I hated the idea of a crew skulking beneath the water-line. But now I begin to see that to keep one's deck from

being a perfect shambles one must keep one's men in shelter. I am told that on such tonnage as ours efficient armour shelter on the main and spar decks is out of the question, and that shelter can only be had at the water-line, and on this basis your report makes me think that the constructors are right.'

'But, sir, even so, our Maxims are surely too light for the work?'

'I don't know—that depends on you and C——.'

'Why so, sir?'

'Because I mean each of you to take one of the barbettes. Those new 46-ton guns are splendid weapons, and they have a new automatic mounting which is supposed to supply the want of heavy quick-firing guns. They say that these guns can fire four or five shots each a minute. With them you ought to do far better than you did with the *Rurik*.'

It was a new idea to me, and all that I could do was to say so plainly, adding that ever since that fight I had been unable to leave my room, and that this long illness had prevented me from keeping up with professional matters as I could have wished.

'Well, you shall have opportunity enough of learning them now, but I shall take good care that you do not do too much. I look upon you as one of our chief weapons, and for the present I shall keep an eye on you myself.'

Then the conversation turned to other things, and presently I took my leave.

The next day I got to work. For four hours or so I explored that barrette—the forward one—by myself, at first without, then with, the official description and directions. It was so new that it took me fully that time to get any idea of it into my head. To begin with, the loading—if you can call that loading which is not touched by any hand—is not done in the barrette, but above it in the shield, which is lengthened a little on purpose. Next, there is no sighting the guns. What is sighted is a dummy, with which the guns align themselves when in firing gear. And even this is not sighted in the ordinary way, but by mirror sights from the platform decks. At quarters not a man need be above the water-line. If anything goes wrong, the most that happens is that everything comes to a standstill until it is set right, and then the mechanism goes on again from the point where it left off. And I rightly spoke of platform decks in the plural, for there are two, each gun having one to itself for its ammunition arrangements, and these decks correspond, speaking roughly, with the two upper decks within the central bulkheads. As I stood on these platform

decks, or rather on the turntables on the same level on which the ammunition arrangements work, I could look down the long passage and see C—— already at work with his division in the after barbette, and I began to see something of the designer's meaning. The long intervening space was comparatively in the open air and even in daylight, and here was to be centred in action the whole life of the ship. I could fancy that I saw the crews of the Maxims at work at their magazines and their gear, and the long line of small-arm men standing patiently on the gratings above them, my own people hard at work around me feeding the ammunition lifts, and my junior officers working the sights. Shot and shell might have their own way with the upper works; we should be in a regular redoubt, and yet as much together and in hand as the crew of a thirty-six gun frigate in the olden time.

In the afternoon I mustered my men for the first time, and we got to work to learn our new weapons. My division consists of two sub-lieutenants, four midshipmen, and thirty men. I explained exactly what each had to do and put them to their various stations. The senior sub-lieutenant took the training, the other the elevating gear, while each midshipman had an ammunition gang under him. Then we saw that the current was on—all the working not done by the recoil is electric—and that the hydraulic mechanism was filled with fluid—the automatic gear depends on springs and hydraulic fittings—then we set to work with the running-in presses. After each trial I made the subs. and middies say what had happened and what they had to do, and in about four trials we all began to understand the working of the things. In a few more we should have done something, when a hand was laid on my shoulder and a voice said: 'That will do; you are spent already. I will take it now.' It was the Captain himself, and he would not let me stay any longer. So I went away to the ward-room, and then found out that I had been ill and was nearly knocked up. I heard afterwards that the skipper kept the division nearly two hours, not drilling them, but making each in turn—officers and men alike—explain in his own words how the guns acted and what each particular man, and especially the speaker, had to do, and why. Certainly next morning I found that they had been in smart hands and had profited accordingly.

That next morning the ship was under way, and we had heavy gun practice off St. Helens. The crews of the Maxims were hard

at work being trained in their electric gear, and so it was almost like general quarters, though there were no small-arm men on the gratings, no quartermasters standing by the lower wheel ready to steer if the conning-house should be wrecked, and no Commander overlooking the whole. I mustered my men, catechised them on their different duties, sent them to their posts, stationed the subs. and the middies, and then ordered the magazines open. Then I saw that the current was on, and examined the gauges of the hydraulic gear, and stood waiting for orders. I ought to explain that though the sighting is done from below by mirror-sights, yet there are two places arranged for me as officer of the barbette, one on the upper platform deck, which is fitted with a sort of mirror arrangement by which I can see nearly as well as if I were on deck, the other in the shield in rear of the guns, communicating with the platform decks by telegraphs and telephones. Each place has a set of sights and duplicate training, elevating, and firing levers, so that whether on the platform deck or in the shield I can see exactly what is going on, can check the work of my subs., or can work the guns with my own hands. On the present occasion I determined to see with my own eyes the actual working of the two guns when fired for the first time, so I took my stand in the shield.

It was a glorious noonday with a light breeze blowing, the ship just gently rising on such swell as there was. Looking out from the manhole in the top of the shield I could see the Commander in charge on the upper bridge, and on the lower the Captain intently watching my proceedings. With him was C——, and below on the spar deck were the whole company of the after barbette looking on. The target was already laid out, and the order was passed to fire three shots singly from the right gun. I passed the word down; two men came up and worked the handjack, the gun reared up her breech to the loading level, and the breech-block ran out to a point just beside my knees; then the men went down and the gun stood waiting ready, but empty. Then I passed the word for the charge: the lift worked, there was a sharp rattle, and the gun was loaded and locked and ready for firing. I ordered the second charge to be sent up at once, and as soon as it was in the loading-trough I glanced at the duplicate sights before me, saw that the subs. were fairly on the mark, and fired—I am bound to say, not without feeling rather nervous. There was a flash and a roar in front of the shield, and closer to me a rattle and clank. Before the light fumes of the smokeless

powder had vanished the gun was loaded and in firing gear once more. The aim was fairly good—not more; so, ordering the third charge to be sent up, I watched the sighting more carefully. The subs. were getting more used to their work: the sighting was steadier and better; again I fired, and the shell burst just over the target. I did not wait long; almost as soon as I saw the splash and foam I made the circuit for the third shot. The gun was ready and fired instantly, and again the splinters struck all round the target, the gun remaining at the loading level with the breech-block run out in readiness for more charges. The Captain gave a nod of approval, and then ordered C—— to put his men to his guns, while all mine were to come on deck and look on. We saw three shots fired with much the same results; then the word was given to fire four shots from the other gun at full speed. I stood with my watch in my hand, and made sure that from the flash of the first shot to that of the last was not more than twenty-seven seconds. The splinters flew all round the target as before, but we could not see that it was actually struck. The Captain seemed very satisfied, and ordered me to send my people back to their stations and fire four rounds in like manner from our left gun, which had not yet been fired. I asked if he would wish me to remain in the shield, but he said no, he would rather that this time I should try the lower station. So my people went to their quarters, the four charges were placed in the revolving feed gear at the foot of the lift, my subs. took their places, and I took mine. At first the mirror arrangement was very puzzling—not that I could not see, but that the dancing of the pictures with the motion of the ship made me so dizzy. By degrees this wore off, and I could test fairly the sighting of my subs. Then I made the firing circuit, and the four shots blazed off—time, twenty-five seconds. This was good. One shot went wide altogether, but against that, one struck the target and smashed it. The gun was left waiting with her breech open, and we examined her carefully. She was hot, but not excessively so, and there was no trace of erosion or other injury. We washed out both guns and eased springs, and then piped down.

The next day we had our first general quarters, and a striking sight it was—more so than I had anticipated. Nearly the whole ship's company, except the torpedo gangs and the engineers and stokers, were mustered in those long passages, and the general effect of united and orderly duty was most striking—especially to those who had been used to the old idea of splitting up a ship's

company into isolated parties, each in its own little fort. Nor was this all: the Commander at his post by the lower wheel could see the least hitch anywhere, and could be on the spot in a moment. Hitches of course there were, and were bound to be at first, and we soon found out that our Commander was as smart as need be. My people had learnt their work pretty well, and the ordinary drill was gone through quickly and easily, the running-in being done by the jacks without any firing.

But in the afternoon we had a new task given us. Somehow I had got an idea that both the Captain and Commander put rather more confidence in me than in C——, and I suppose that I ought to be flattered that they chose my guns for the trial rather than his, but indeed I would rather go through a stiff fight any day. We were ordered to our quarters; the magazines were opened; seven charges were served out and put in the feed gear—four for one gun, three for the other—and then we waited. Presently came down to us Captain, Commander, and first lieutenant. They looked over everything for a minute or two, and then the Commander began unscrewing some of the electric contacts. I stared, knowing that he was putting the gear of the electric brake out of action, and I must say that when the order to fire that gun was given I did expect a smash. But no. There was the flash and roar of the gun, and rather more shock from the recoil than usual—that was all. We all went on deck to look at her, and found her at rest near the firing point on the slide with her breech closed. The brake gear was put in order again, the handjack started, and she worked just as if nothing had happened. A second shot was tried in the same way from the other gun and with the same result, and then I began to breathe freely. It is true that I knew that any derangement of the brake ought to put on its whole power instead of taking it off, but until it was tried I was not at all so sure that it would do so, or what the result would be if it did: after this trial there was no doubt. All the other five shots were fired, and at each shot some new part of the gear was put out of action, but what it was we were not told beforehand. At every shot the gun came quietly to a standstill at the point in its action corresponding to the disabled apparatus; and every time that this happened some one fresh—officer or man indifferently—was called on to set matters right and start the action again. By the time we had done that drill I think that every one of us had come to the conclusion that our guns were as safe as they were easy to work.

Since then, every day's experience has confirmed us in our good opinion of the ship and her gear, and, above all, of the benefits of union in duty. Without the means of fighting from the 'shelter trench' this would be impossible, but with those means it far outweighs the objections one would otherwise feel to withdrawing the men from the upper works in battle.

Blue water and work have made me all right again. We have an excellent set of men in the ward-room, good comrades in every way. If our commission is as successful as it promises to be happy, we shall do well.

I just open this to say that we have our orders, and shall be under way in an hour's time.

#### LETTER IV.

*Centurion, off Vigo.*

The prizes are just leaving us, so I put together and finish up in a hurry the notes I wrote for you on our voyage out. If they make rather a disjointed letter I hope you will forgive it.

We have had a splendid two days' run from Plymouth. We just spoke the blockaders off Brest, otherwise we did not see a single craft. The whole sea seemed a desert, such a desert as war only can make. Both days we have had our general quarters, and both nights we have had new quarters, of a kind, which is our Captain's own invention. At eight bells every evening we of the ward-room all meet in his cabin, and there for an hour and a half every possible form of fighting the ship, and every duty which she is likely to have to discharge, is discussed. One thing was quickly decided, which was that, for repelling torpedo attacks, especially at night, it would be better to fight the Maxims by hand than by the electric gear. They can be fought either way, and our men are already trained in both methods, so there is no difficulty about this. Another point on which both C—— and I agreed, and carried the rest—even including the Captain—with us was that at night it was difficult, if not impossible, to sight the heavy guns from below, and that it would be better in fighting at night that we two should each do our own sighting from our places in the rear of the shields, where we could work just as well as the subs. could, and where we could manage luminous sights much better. Another thing that we all agreed upon was to get close to an enemy and give it him hot as soon as we could. This depends on a mere calculation of chances; assuming that we can

fire our heavy guns six times as fast as our enemy can his, which is probably the case, it follows that at effective ranges we have six times more chances of hitting than he has, and consequently have as much greater chances of inflicting decisive injury, whereas at long ranges this superiority would be much less decisive.

These are our reflections ; perhaps we shall soon test them.

Sooner than we thought. I wrote the last lines looking forward to a quiet middle watch and the usual daily routine afterwards, and little thinking that in less than twelve hours we should have seen our first fight, if only a little one.

When I went on deck to take charge of the watch it was blowing great guns from the south-west, with occasional heavy squalls of rain. The skipper came on deck once or twice, but he did not seem anxious, and gave me no particular caution. I paced the upper bridge forward, seeing that my look-outs were on the alert, and occasionally casting an eye on the figures of the watch on deck sheltering under the lee of the bulwarks. By-and-by a glorious moon shone out between two squalls. There was nothing visible but the seas, showing white in the moonlight, and the driving scud flying swiftly across the sky. Presently another squall broke with a driving rain, which hissed on bridge and deck ; it soon passed, and the moon shone out again as brightly as before. It was now past seven bells, and I began to think of the dog watch and turning in when there was a hail from the foretop.

‘Sail on the weather bow!’

I jumped up the rigging in less time than it takes to write it.

‘Where away?’

‘Three points on the weather bow, sir, just under the moon.’

I looked hard, but could only see the heaving swell and a black patch of squall just where the look-out pointed.

‘What was she like?’

‘Two small craft, sir, with a lot of top-hamper.’

‘Two of them?’

‘Yes, sir, they seemed to be making badish weather of it.’

Two of them together did not look well ; still I did not want to rouse the ship for nothing.

‘Two, did you say? Are you sure?’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘What was the top-hamper like?’

‘Couldn’t rightly say, sir : seemed heavy for small craft.

Just then there came a rift in the rising squall, and for a second I saw them both. The next instant I was sliding down a backstay ; in two minutes more the Captain was roused, the men scurrying to their quarters, and the induced draught on. The squall quickly passed over us, leaving a white moon-lit sea ; by this time the whole ship's company were at ' torpedo quarters ' ; the ship was quickening rapidly to full speed ; my people, having nothing to do with the heavy guns, were standing by with small arms. I was standing by the Captain on the upper bridge ; but where was the enemy ? We searched the moonlit sea, but not a trace was to be seen ; the Captain was just turning round to me with, I am sure, something forcible on his lips, when all of a sudden they rose into view on the swell, no longer in the distant offing, but less than two knots off, coming dead on, one on either bow, villainous *torpilleurs de haute mer* as ever were seen. Evidently they had run down to attack us under cover of the squall, and it was fortunate for us that it had outstripped them, for otherwise we might have been attacked in the rain and darkness without much chance of defending ourselves. As it was both we and the enemy were now at full speed ; we ported sharply to attack the one which had been seen on our starboard bow ; then as she rose again on the swell we started our whole broadside of Maxims. For one or two seconds the aim seemed wild, but then the missiles found their mark. A striking scene it was when one thinks of it coolly, though there was but little cool reflection at the moment—the heaving moonlit seas, the dark hull of the *torpilleur* sparkling like some great firework with the flashes of bursting shell, the long white streaks of her torpedoes gleaming for the moment and then vanishing past our quarter, and in the near foreground the fiery streams from our Maxim broadside. It was but for a few seconds ; then the enemy slackened and broached to, and in an instant she had vanished. There was no bursting boiler, no swirl in the sea to speak of ; simply she was gone like a dream.

Her consort had clearly been confused by our sudden change of course, and perhaps also by the consciousness of being discovered, and of her own danger. She now headed up to windward, and attempted to escape. She might attempt—round came the ship broadside on to her, and kept steadily on just out of range of her torpedoes. For some reason or other she clearly did not mean to run before the wind ; escape with the wind and sea on her beam she could not, as we knew ; so our skipper did

not hurry matters, but simply kept steadily on, firing single shots at her just to show what we could do.

The day was now fast breaking, with the grey and sickly light of a stormy dawn, and the enemy, or, rather, the chase (for she no longer attempted to resist) was struggling on against wind and sea, the waves continually making a clean breach over her. Even our forecastle was at times under water with the head seas, but notwithstanding this we had to reduce speed in order to keep her on our beam. We were firing with our 12-pounders, and we saw shell after shell burst over or aboard her until just after sunrise she struck.

We lowered boats with some difficulty, and our junior lieutenant went off to take possession. We watched them as they approached and boarded the prize; then we could see men taking to the boats again quickly and pushing off. Presently they were alongside, bringing with them the survivors of the French crew, but long before that the second *torpilleur* had sunk like the first. The survivors were all wounded, most of them severely, and their account of the effect of our 12-pounder shells was very satisfactory. The lieutenant in command was among those rescued; one of the ward-room cabins was cleared for him, the rest were sent to the sickbay, except two, over whom the surgeons shook their heads. These two were, I fancy, attended to last; at all events, they went, not to hammocks, but to a quiet berth under the forward bridge, where they are lying now, with their own ensign spread over them.

The prisoners told the skipper something about an armoured vessel with which they were cruising, and a British ship which the three had engaged and sunk some two days before. We had piped down from quarters, and we of the ward-room were just sitting down to breakfast when the Commander told us this piece of news, which, as you may imagine, made us tremendously excited. We despatched that breakfast pretty quickly, and almost as soon as it was over the drum beat to general quarters. I saw all my men at their stations, the guns loaded, the current on, the hydraulic gear properly filled up and ready; then I went into the gun-shield and took my place there. Seeing the Captain on the lower bridge close to me, I asked his leave to work my guns from there; it was coming on very thick at times, and besides my own taste for fighting in the open air, I doubted whether we could use the mirror sights effectually in such a light. He hesitated a little, and then told me to do what I thought

best, so I stayed where I was. I telephoned down to fill up the feed-gear of each lift, and have six more rounds ready; we already had one in each gun, and two more on their way up in each lift, so that we had fifteen rounds ready for each gun. Then I waited, looking out through the manhole at the driving rain and the tossing foam-flecked sea.

About an hour and a half passed like this. I heard afterwards that the people down below voted it very slow indeed, and I began to think so myself, when suddenly there sounded the sharp boom of a shotted gun somewhere ahead. Instantly the Captain's word rang out for full steam, and she promptly quickened to her fighting speed. The seas kept flooding her forecastle, but not so much so as to prevent my working the guns; besides, the skipper kept her head about a point and a half off the wind, so it was not as if we were steaming dead in the wind's eye. Presently there came the boom of another gun, then the hoarse screech of a Maxim, then from out of the rain and fog a shot came across the seas, sending up spouts of foam at each ricochet. Next we saw a dim shadow on the port bow, which swiftly deepened into a long white-painted mail steamer, with the blue ensign flying, and one of her funnels shot away. She passed close by us, hardly a cable's length off. Looking out of my manhole I could see her wrecked deck-houses, and her people waving their hands and cheering. And at that very moment there appeared another dim shadow dead ahead. There was a bright flash from the shadow, and the flame and smoke of a bursting shell on the steamer's decks. As it cleared I saw two girls, who had been waving to us an instant before, lying together in a heap. I telephoned to the subs. to lay our guns on that shadow, and fingered the firing-lever.

Swiftly it deepened into the unmistakable outline of the *Dupuy de Lôme*, with her ugly ends and her two unequal funnels. 'Engage as your guns bear,' said the tiny voice of the telephone from the conning-house close at my ear—even at that moment it put me in mind of the gnat in *Alice in Wonderland*.<sup>1</sup> The sights came fair on the enemy and I fired. Her broadside sounded at the same moment as the roar of our guns, and there was a crash and a rattle somewhere about our decks. All that I knew or could think of was the task of watching those sights, and firing as they bore. Somehow I did it fairly, not as well

<sup>1</sup> Telephones are said to be too indistinct for use at sea. A 'loud-sounding' telephone has recently been brought out which may possibly be more satisfactory.

as I could have wished, but still fairly. She swept quickly past, and it was not easy to see one's mark with the bright blaze and drifting smoke of the two great guns always before one's eyes, and the reeking fumes of the cordite eddying round one every time that a breech was opened. Presently there came a pause in our fire, and at that moment she vanished from my sight behind the bridge, though I now could hear the Maxims roaring like rushing water and the boom of C——'s guns thundering every five seconds or so like the taps of a big drum. My two guns stood empty and waiting with their breech-blocks run out, and no charges came up. My questions down the telephone brought for answer, 'Aye, aye, sir,' but nothing else. The ship was now swinging round under her starboard helm, and in a second or two the guns would bear again, and still they were empty. I was thinking of rushing down to see what was the matter when the charges came up. The two guns closed their breeches with a clank, and we were in firing gear again just as the ship stood well across the enemy's stern, and brought my guns once more to bear. I was actually pulling down the firing-lever when the tiny voice at my ear said, 'Cease firing.' Then I looked at the enemy and saw that her colours were gone. Her foremast had been shot away and had fallen all along her decks. Her great funnel had been wrecked, either by our fire or by the fall of the foremast, and her upper works had been frightfully cut up. Boats were called away and the first lieutenant boarded her, and soon we saw the white ensign flying over the tricolour. Then we left her and ran down to find the mail steamer.

We had not long to search for her, and I accompanied our Captain and all our surgeons on board. Well, you don't want a description of non-combatants cut up with shells and Maxims, so I will leave out what we saw. The worst of it had been put to rights, but the first officer, his captain having been cut in two by a shell, took us round to the starboard side and without a word showed us those two poor girls, still lying in a heap together as I had seen them fall. We all stood bareheaded for a minute and then moved away, our Captain muttering something about courts-martial. Then, leaving the surgeons on board and promising to send help to refit her, we jumped into our boats again (nasty work it was in such a sea as that) and pulled off to our own ship. We did not go aboard: she hove lines to us and towed us astern towards the prize. As we neared her we cast off the lines and then boarded her, with a great deal of difficulty, for she was almost out of control, and the

heavy seas breaking on her sides made it dangerous work to go near her. Once on board we stood dismayed at the ruin that those brief seconds had wrought. Of the destruction of her upper works we had all seen something, but of the state of her main-deck we had entertained no conception. She is clad all over, as you may know, with four-inch armour—not thick enough to be of the slightest use against our heavy guns, but just thick enough to make every shell unfailingly burst inboard. And certainly every shell that hit had burst with awful effect. Spar and main decks were started; every turret was wrecked; not a man seemed to have escaped from her main-deck; those on her spar deck had been mown down by the Maxims as by fiery scythes. She was leaking all along her water-line, notwithstanding her coffer-dams, and, indeed, if no help had been near, she must soon have foundered. Our prize crew had got to work already to rig a jury funnel, and as soon as that was done the first lieutenant was confident that he could get the steam-pumps to work and manage to keep her afloat.

There were a number of men aboard her helping the prize crew, who certainly were bluejackets, and as certainly not our fellows, and I was about to ask who they were and where they came from, when I stumbled upon M——, whom you knew as navigating lieutenant of the *Gibraltar*. We stared at each other in surprise, and both at the same moment said, 'Hallo! where have you come from?' He answered first,—

'Come from? I come from the hold of this d——d Frenchman, who sank our poor old craft three days ago. Where do you come from?'

'I come from our ship out yonder; we have paid your score for you anyhow.'

'Your ship? Which of the lot is yours?'

'Which of the lot?—why, there is but one.'

'Is but one—why, where are the rest of the fleet?'

'There is no fleet, only our own ship, the *Centurion*.'

'No fleet? Why surely this beggar has been happening on to a fleet of battle-ships.'

'What on earth made you think of that?'

'Why, the awful fire we heard crashing over head—we made sure that there must be four ships firing at the least; no one ship ever built could have "hosed" her so.'

'Well, I don't know; I fancy I sent her some eighteen shells myself.'

'You sent her eighteen shells yourself! You don't want me to believe all that?'

'No, not if you don't like, but I did it.'

He stared more incredulously than ever, and then I was sent for by the Captain and the conversation ended for the time.

In about three hours' time the big funnel was so far repaired that the boilers could all be worked again, and the steam pumps were clearing the ship. By this time both ships had rejoined the mail steamer, and our surgeons, having given all the assistance they could, boarded the prize, while I accompanied our own Captain back on board the *Centurion*. He had refused to permit the surviving French officers to keep their swords, but beyond this nothing could be said; their captain and senior lieutenants, who were responsible for their fatal fire and the death of those poor girls, were dead; and besides what will you have?—if a liner persists in refusing to be brought to by a man-of-war she must expect to be fired upon.

What a change it was to get on board our own ship! Two or three shells had burst on board her, a couple of Maxims were disabled, some black patches and smashed bulkheads disfigured her main deck, and that was all. No heaps of mangled corpses, no pools of blood, no tangled masses of wreckage; but for the traces of the shells we might never have been in action at all. The Captain called up C—— and myself, thanked us heartily for our services at the heavy guns, and so dismissed us, and we went to the ward-room thinking not a little of ourselves. In the ward-room was the Commander, and he fell foul of me in an instant.

'I'll tell you what it is—if you didn't go aloft to see the fighting, but stayed at your proper station below where you could work your guns just as well, your fellows wouldn't be getting their gear hitched where it was most wanted.'

I did not at first know what he meant, though I had a shrewd notion that he referred to that unlucky pause in sending up the ammunition.

'What do I mean? Why, I mean that one of your confounded fellows tried to put a charge of powder into the feed-gear where the shot should go, and because he couldn't all the rest of that gang got blocked, and the gang below thought something was wrong and stopped firing accordingly. If you had been below it wouldn't have happened—as it was your subs. lost their heads and I had to sort the lot—I did it too.'

This last I did not doubt; however I made as proper an answer

as I could and the matter ended. Myself, I half think the Commander is right; I hate those mirror sights, it is true, but I could use them if only I tried, and there is no doubt that, trusting as I now do in the guns, my proper place is below where I can keep an eye on the men.

This evening we buried the two poor Frenchmen from the *torpilleur*. Their lieutenant insisted on being carried on deck to see it, and their comrades stood next the grating. It was a grave and quiet scene, a fit ending to a day of battle.

This morning we had an addition to our ward-room mess at breakfast in the shape of M——, whom the first lieutenant sent away from the prize to find more comfortable quarters on board this ship. It was my watch below after breakfast, and so many of our men being away we could not have the usual general quarters; so I determined to have a morning by myself at that sighting gear. I readily got permission to have the current turned on, and was on my way to the platform deck when M—— suddenly accosted me with, 'What did you say yesterday about those eighteen shells; surely you were gammoning?' So I asked him to come and see, and we spent some half an hour or so looking at the two guns and their gear. At last he said, 'Ah! three days ago we would have given our lives for one of those.' After that he stayed with me the rest of that watch, taking turns himself at the sights when they made me dizzy; but on the whole I have got quite sufficiently used to them to be sure that I can work the guns from below as well as from aloft, even at night. M—— has gone crazy over this ship—says she is the finest fighting machine ever seen—wants the skipper to have him as a volunteer, and so on.

They have patched up both the prize and the mail steamer, and M—— will see them both safe home to Plymouth with his *Gibraltars*. Our own loss is—one man wounded, and that slightly!

For myself I am as well as ever, and now these notes must go off with the prize. Farewell.

#### LETTER V.

*Centurion, Gibraltar.*

We came on here without further adventures, and now we have filled up our bunkers, replaced the two Maxims, made good our other small damages, and taken in fresh ammunition, so we are ready again for anything. I have had my people pretty

constantly at their quarters, working with Morris tubes, and I don't think they will go wrong over that feed-gear again. I cannot make out how they did it then, except that it was the first time they had ever worked the guns in earnest, and I suppose that the least thing upset them. Myself, I have got used to that strange mirror arrangement, and so, too, have my subs.; we can all of us now work from the platform decks just as well as from the shields, but I have great doubts about night work. I think, after all, that if we have any night fighting I shall have to aim from the shield.

The *Hornet* came in yesterday with orders from the Admiral; all that we know is that we are to stay here for the present. There is no news of any sort stirring, unless we may reckon as news a sort of indistinct rumour of hard fighting somewhere, but the garrison people say that it is only the echo of our own doings. The *Hornet* stays here as tender.

## LETTER VI.

*Royal Oak, Gibraltar.*

You ask for a detailed story, but there is but little to add to what you know already. The *Centurion* is gone, the *Charlemagne* and the *Latouche Tréville* are in port here, and that is about all. I will go on with my disjointed notes where I left off; they are just as they were written, and this must be their excuse. When they come to an end I will try to write better.

I sent off my last letter by a Yankee tramp bound for Liverpool. She had hardly cleared the bay when the *Havock* came in with news, the purport of which we soon knew by the sixty-three guns that pealed out from the Rock. But, even while the salute was being fired, our own signal was hoisted to recall men on shore, and all hands were called to warp the ship in nearer to the New Mole. The harbour tugs helped us, and in half an hour we had her moored close inside the *Massilia*, who happened to be in port; then we lowered her funnels and topmasts and slacked out her standing rigging, so that it would have been difficult indeed for anyone a mile or so out at sea to tell that a powerful battleship was in port. Meanwhile, we could see the *Havock* taking in coal and the *Hornet* getting up steam, and, as you may imagine, all sorts of rumours were flying about the ship. There had been a battle; the salutes were a blind and a sham; why did not the Captain take us out to fight instead of hiding the ship in that

fashion? and so on—the sort of thing that one has to pretend not to hear. Presently the Captain sent both for C—— and me to accompany him in his gig. On reaching the gangway we found the Commander with him, and all four of us were pulled on board the *Hornet*, who immediately weighed and stood out to sea. Meanwhile we heard the whole news of the battle of Cartagena, but with an addition which you did not see in the newspapers. The Admiral had sent word that the leading squadron of the enemy had never been engaged at all; they had kept steadily on their course while the rear squadron was being cut to pieces, and from this he had inferred that some serious combination was in hand. Whatever it was, his own fleet had too little coal left and too many ships damaged to pursue, and the orders were that the *Centurion* and any other ships in port were to defeat the enemy's designs at all hazards. The *Havock* had reported that the enemy's squadron consisted of four ships, and that they were now nearing the Rock. To this news the Captain added that he proposed to observe them carefully as they passed the Rock, and he especially wished C—— and me to do so also, so as to know what parts of the enemy's ships we were to attack.

C—— asked him if he proposed to engage the enemy in the Gut; the Captain said No, he thought not; to fight in narrow waters would be to lose the advantage of our great speed. His plan was to let the enemy pass and then pursue them, and seek to take them in detail, and with this view he had concealed the ship. I do not know exactly what we thought; I believe I could have wished to find myself at close quarters with my two guns making a quick end of the thing one way or another. But whatever we both thought, it was not for us to criticise the Captain's plans, even if they had not been as wise as they undoubtedly were.

By this time we were well clear of the bay, and we could easily make out the enemy in the offing to the east of the Rock. With the glass we could identify a battle-ship of the *Charlemagne* class; another, which must be either the *Jauréguiberry* or the *Carnot*; a third, which must be either the *Bouvines* or *Tréhouart*, and a cruiser of the *Bruix* class. On referring to such information as we had of the French fleet at Toulon, and of the ships taken or sunk at Cartagena, we were tolerably sure that our opponents were the *Charlemagne*, the *Jauréguiberry*, the *Tréhouart*, and the *Latouche Tréville*—a force sufficient to sink the *Centurion* three times over. Still, that was not the question; the point was, what mischief could she do to them first?

We now stood across the bay to see what could be made out of the *Centurion*, and satisfied ourselves that she was as nearly invisible as might be. Then the enemy being already off Europa Point, we ran into Europa Bay to have a good view of them as they passed.

They came on slowly, and we reached our intended berth under the Buena Vista batteries some time before they cleared Europa Point. It was a glorious sight to see the great ships passing with a slow and stately movement in the bright evening sunshine. From where we lay we could see the colours of uniforms and the glitter of arms on their bridges. The sea was perfectly calm, and there was just enough ripple along their massive sides to set them off to perfection. First, and a long distance ahead, came the *Latouche Tréville*; next came the *Charlemagne*, carrying a rear-admiral's flag; then the *Tréhouart*; and last of all the *Jauréguiberry*. They did not stop to look into the bay, nor did they send in any torpedo craft; indeed they had none with them except the launches which they carried on their decks. C—— and I watched them carefully, wondering what we should aim at. We soon concluded that the *Charlemagne* was the easiest to deal with so far as we were concerned, for we would fire at her long midship battery, and would be tolerably confident of causing such slaughter and demoralisation as to put her *hors de combat* for an hour or so. Of the *Tréhouart* we thought least of all; her belt rises so little above the water that our Maxims would quickly make her unseaworthy. We both agreed that in fighting the *Latouche Tréville* we should fire low and try to hit her belts. As for the *Jauréguiberry* we differed: C—— thinking that he would fire at her belt, I preferring to aim at the turrets of her heavy guns.

We now left our berth and steamed slowly after them; we knew that the *Hornet* had been seen, and we wished to make out as much as we could before rejoining our own ship. As we approached, the *Jauréguiberry* fired a few rounds from her light guns, which threw up jets of foam in front of our bows, but did no mischief, and she ceased even this fire when she saw that we meant to keep our distance. We tried to make out what launches they carried, but we were too far off, and it would have been foolhardy to go nearer; so we changed course and stood back towards the New Mole, and were soon on board our own ship again.

There we found steam up, and the ship cleared for action,

only the crew were not yet at their quarters. The *Havock* had finished coaling, and was close astern with full steam ready. The *Jauréguiberry* was now shut in behind Carnero Point, the sun was sinking in a golden haze over Algeciras, and the sightseers, both on Spanish and English shores, were dispersing to their quiet homes, when the order was given to cast loose from the *Massilia* and proceed at three-quarter speed. The night fell quickly, and as soon as we were well under way, the *Havock* went ahead to reconnoitre, while we followed her without changing our speed. She was some time away, and we were already clear of the Gut when we saw her returning at full speed and flashing signals to us. What the signals were I could not make out, for before they were fairly begun the drum beat to quarters, and I went below.

My people were already at their stations with the magazines open, and the usual fifteen cartridges per gun ready. Quickly I went over the gear with my two subs., and then we fitted the luminous sights, and returned to the platform deck. A change, indeed, it was; above it was now a dark, though starlight night, with a cold wind blowing. Every light was put out; hardly a man was visible, and the ship seemed like a huge phantom speeding over the iron-grey waters. Below the long narrow passages—fighting decks we call them—were brilliantly lit with the electric light, and alive with men, all at their several duties or stations, and there was a warm homelike feeling about the whole which was strangely at variance with the business in hand. In one respect our general quarters were changed since our fight with the *Dupuy de Lôme*. That fight had shown clearly that a mass of small-arm men standing idly on parade was a great drawback; they could hardly ever be wanted for boarding or repelling boarders, and standing there doing nothing they got impatient and almost insubordinate themselves, and made others excited and impatient too; so this time a number of men had been sent away in our two torpedo launches, and the steam pinnace which went with them; a number of others were sent forward and aft to help the torpedo gangs; and yet others were told off to examine, and if possible refill, the cartridges of the Maxims as they were returned to the fighting decks. As for the heavy cartridges, no one seemed to think of refilling them on the spot, and yet they were just as fit for it as those of the Maxims. But I did not care about this; I knew that I had fifty rounds per gun ready filled, and even if I were as wasteful as I fear I was over the

*Dupuy de Lôme*, still there was little doubt that they would see us through any continuous fight. The effect of thus lessening the parade on the fighting decks was to give more room, and greatly to enhance the idea of united and orderly duty, which is always so striking on board the *Centurion*. I ought to add that the whole of the warm, well-lit, orderly scene was roofed in with screens, which had been rigged to prevent the loom of the lights showing through gratings and skylights, and gave the effect of a tent-roof.

To look through my mirror sights was exactly like turning from a bright crowded ball-room to look through the window into a dark night. I could see the white spots of the luminous sights, and that was all that I could see; it was of no use looking and pretending that one could see the sky-line or anything else, the thing was simply hopeless. My subs. said the same, so at length I sent to the Commander and asked leave to go back to the shield. I watched him as he got the message, and I could see that it made him very grumpy, but at that minute he received a message, delivered by one of C——'s middies, which (as I heard afterwards) was just the same. The end of it was that he came to me and tried the sights himself, and finally told me to go where I liked, provided only I fought the guns somehow. I did not wait for another word; the next moment I was going as fast as I could up the iron ladders inside the barbette, and as soon as I was in my place in the shield I telephoned down to the subs. to leave me to do the training and sighting. Then I looked out through the manhole and tried to realise what was going on.

A weird sight it was. The night, as I have said, was starlight, but there were banks of fog on the water, which were very confusing; sometimes objects at a great distance were visible, sometimes others near at hand were concealed. This it was, beyond doubt, which made the mirror sights useless; it was impossible when using them to realise the effect of the fog-banks, and the result was simple mystification. Now being in the open air I succeeded in making out the three battle-ships a long way off, apparently in line ahead, while much nearer to us was the *Latouche Tréville*, evidently uneasy and constantly flashing round her search-lights. Their effect on the banks of rolling mist was most wonderful: sometimes they seemed half obscured, at other times the whole sky and sea seemed indistinctly luminous, and yet again the fog-banks seemed to take strange and spectral shapes, or the spots from which the rays had just been deflected turned to utter

blackness. On a sudden an answering search-light flashed out; every line of the enemy's cruiser stood out like burnished silver against the dark background, and the flash and roar of her lighter pieces broke the silence of the night. Instantly the strange light vanished, then another flashed out, to be saluted with another discharge, and so on, like two will-o'-the-wisps at play.

What all this meant I did not know, but I divined at once that our skipper would make for the cruiser before she could be supported by her own battle-ships. She was about three points on our starboard bow, and so I promptly trained my two guns over on that side, and then kept watching her over the sights, expecting every second to hear the voice of the telephone at my ear. And now the baffling clouds of mist seemed to close in upon us, and it became increasingly difficult to see the cruiser—all the more so from the strange loom of the search-lights in the fog. All at once she sounded signals with her siren, and then seemed to quicken to full speed, taking a wide sweep to our starboard as she did so. I just got a moment's glance towards the battle-ships through a lane in the fog, and fancied that they were changing course to port, but at that moment we ported and stood after the cruiser, and I had no more time to think of anything else. She was now well on our starboard bow—that I knew—but she had switched off her own search-lights, and where she was exactly it was impossible to tell in the fog. There was one blur in the night where the mist looked darker than elsewhere, and on that I kept my guns trained as well as I could; and from that blur there suddenly came the blaze and roar of a heavy discharge, followed instantly by a bright blue flash and a sharp ringing explosion somewhere at a distance; then all was as dark and still as death.

For a few seconds I could see nothing, then my eyes got used to the blackness, and I made out a phantom shape swiftly crossing our bows some eight or nine cables ahead. As swiftly my guns followed her; we closed in on her quickly, and the telephone spoke, 'Fire low as the guns bear.' Guns bear indeed! Mine had borne for some time, and on the instant I got a fair elevation and pulled over the lever, and the flame of the great guns scattered the darkness. Just at that moment there came the flash and roar of an answering broadside; then we sped swiftly past her stern, no longer in darkness, for our Maxims gave a flickering daylight, paling every other second before the broad blaze of a heavy gun. It was only for half a minute or so; then she vanished, and the mist settled down thicker than ever. Somewhere away on our

port beam were the enemy, now reunited—we could tell that by the shouting and the flashing of lights. Ourselves we kept on our course, and soon were in the starlit night once more, while astern of us the mist was silvered by the rising moon.

Overhead the siren was pealing out signals for the light craft to rejoin us, and it seemed as if the fighting was over for the night. Myself I could not understand it in the least. I should have thought that an enemy more or less surprised and caught in those fog banks gave us just the opportunity we wanted, but the skipper apparently thought otherwise. We piped down and the watch was set, and the thing was over. My subs. dismissed the men below at once, as I thought it no great sin to leave the guns loaded and ready; and then, instead of going below, I stepped down on to the deck and got out by stooping below the shield, and so went aft.

The fire of the *Latouche Tréville* had done more mischief than I thought. Two of our boats were completely wrecked on their davits, several windsails were knocked to pieces, and no less than four Maxims were dismounted. Men were already at work clearing the wreck, and it was my watch below, so I went down at once to the ward-room, to find that a heavy shell had gone clean through my cabin without doing much mischief, had passed through the ward-room, and had burst in a cabin to starboard, wrecking it and those on each side of it. Finding my own belongings tolerably in order, I am sitting down to write these notes.

While I am writing our steam pinnace comes on board with news serious enough. That flash which we saw in the fog was the end of the *Havock*. A shot from the *Latouche Tréville* struck one of her torpedoes and blew her to pieces; the few survivors of her crew were picked up by the pinnace. We hear, too, that one of our second-class launches has been sunk during the night; so on the whole we have very little to boast of.

As soon as it was light enough to see anything we were all of us on the alert trying to catch a glimpse of the enemy. With the dawn there came a fresh wind from the west that rolled away the fog-banks before it, leaving a sky without a cloud, except some rolling woolpacks in the wind's eye that might mean dirty weather to come. The watch on deck had cleared away the wreck and splinters about our decks; and except for the smashed and empty pedestals of the dismounted Maxims and the great gap in our quarter where the ward-room cabins were blown away, there was but

little trace of our night's work. We could see a mile or so away on our port quarter the *Hornet* and our own surviving torpedo launch on duty as videttes, and beyond them was the mass of fog-bank drifting away before the wind.

Eagerly we watched that fog-bank drifting away, and soon we saw some dark shapes standing out just as a pale and watery sun shone over the sea. To those who could look at these signs it was clear that our coming battle would be fought in heavy weather, but most of us had no eyes for the weather. There were the enemy under easy steam, but instead of their line ahead they were formed in two divisions. First came the *Charlemagne* and *Jauréguiberry* in line abeam, then some distance astern were the *Tréhouart* and—was that crippled wreck with her heavy list, her mainmast gone, and her decks swept, the proud and stately *Latouche Tréville*? We all had to take a second look to make sure—and then we saw with the glass the white streams spouting from her pumps, and boats busily plying, apparently taking off wounded. C—— and I were standing with the marine officer, who was congratulating us on our gunnery, when the Commander joined us and said that the drum would beat to quarters as soon as the ship's company had had their breakfast, and the orders were strict that everyone was to get it coolly and without excitement, for no one could tell how long the thing would last. So we went down to our battered ward-room together, and as I went I asked the Commander why we had not continued the fight the night before. He said he did not know; now that he saw what we had done, he only wished we had done more of it. 'But you know,' he added, 'that these quick rushes, where the whole thing is done in a few seconds, are new to us all—if I had been in the Captain's place I don't know that I should have cared for a raid on those three ships all at once—and yet now I believe that it might have been done in the fog and in the night.' Then I asked how our people had got on while C—— and I were in the shields, and to this he answered, 'Pretty well; but if I were you I would keep with them as much as I could. You see it makes it quite another thing when the men see their officer among them handling the sights.'

We gulped down our coffee and had hardly done so when the drum beat. I knew my guns were ready, for they had been left so: I took a glance at the gauges, saw my men at their stations and the charges ready, and took my place at the mirror sights. And how different it was from that puzzling fog the night before! Now

I could see what was going on almost as well as if I was on deck. We were running down towards the enemy almost at full speed, and their leading division hoisted their colours and opened fire with their light guns. The effect I could not see; once I thought I heard a crash overhead, as if something had hit us, but at that moment we ported and changed course, and the enemy were quickly shut out from my sight. We now kept on our new course nearly at full speed, as we could tell by the motion of the engines, but for the rest we knew as little of the progress of the fight as if we had been aboard a hulk in Portsmouth.

I have written these notes so far in the interval of this dreary wait. We are all keeping our men at such work as we can, but notwithstanding this it is deadly dull. Occasionally there is the crash and rattle of a shell overhead—not very often, for the enemy seem to be making very bad practice—more often I can see, as I glance at my mirrors, their shells ricocheting far ahead. There is a heavy swell running, and our forecastle is constantly flooded with the green seas, and this, no doubt, accounts for the bad practice and slow fire of the enemy.

At this point my notes cease: I am now writing at my ease on board the *Royal Oak*, but I cannot help the bad style, so you must forego the promised amendment.

JAMES EASTWICK.

(To be concluded)

## *Sunshine and Life.*

WE have gradually within the last few years been awakening to the novel fact that sunshine, whilst essential to green plant life, is by no means indispensable to the most primitive forms of vegetable existence with which we are acquainted, *i.e.* bacteria. In fact, we have found out that if we wish to keep our microbial nursery in a healthy, flourishing condition, we must carefully banish all sources of light from our cultivations, and that a dark cupboard is one of the essential requisites of a bacteriological laboratory.

The subject was naturally too original and fascinating a one for the investigator to permit of its long remaining dormant or unexplored, and hence we have received a large number of most interesting contributions from workers in all parts of the world. Many obvious problems presented themselves at once for solution, and to a few of these I referred in an article on 'Bacterial Life and Light,' which appeared in a previous issue of this Magazine.<sup>1</sup>

Much has been done since then, and whilst our views have in some directions been modified, they have in others been considerably extended.

Thus in one important question, that of water purification, solar enthusiasts rashly jumped at the convenient hypothesis, based on very slender experimental evidence, that sunshine was possessed of such omniscient power to slay microbes, that we might safely rely upon it to remove the noxious organisms in our streams, and might comfortably, therefore, turn sewage into our rivers. This was actually suggested in a proposal for dealing with the sewage of Cologne. But further investigations have caused us to considerably qualify our opinions in this direction, and whilst all due credit may be permitted to sunshine for what it can accomplish in the destruction of bacteria in water, we find that its potency is distinctly confined to the upper layers of water.

<sup>1</sup> LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE, *September*, 1893.

Perhaps Dr. Procacci's experiments will most clearly convey some idea of this limitation, for he made a special study of this particular phenomenon. Some drain water, containing, of course, an abundance of microbial life, was placed in cylindrical glass vessels, and only the perpendicular rays of the sun were allowed to play upon it. The column of water was about two feet high, and whilst a bacteriological examination at the commencement of the research showed that about 2,000 microbes were present in every twenty drops of water taken from the surface, centre, and bottom of the vessel respectively, after three hours' sunshine only nine and ten were found in the surface and centre portions of the water, whilst at the bottom the numbers remained practically unchanged. Professor Buchner, of Munich, demonstrated the same impotence of the sun's rays to destroy bacteria much beneath the surface of water, in some ingenious experiments he made in the Starnberger See, near Munich. He lowered glass dishes containing jelly thickly sown with typhoid bacilli to different depths in the water during bright sunshine; those kept at a depth of about five feet subsequently showed no sign of life, whilst those immersed about ten feet developed abundant growths; in both cases the exposure was prolonged over four and a half hours.

In our own rivers Thames and Lea, Professor Percy Frankland has frequently found about twenty times more microbes in the winter than in the summer months, but it would be extremely rash to therefore infer that the comparative poverty of bacterial life was due to the greater potency of the sun's rays in the summer than in the winter. Doubtless it may contribute to this beneficial result, but we know as a matter of fact that, in the summer, these rivers receive a large proportion of spring water, which is comparatively poor in microbes, and that this factor also must not be ignored in discussing the improved bacterial quality of these waters at this season of the year.

Another point which must be taken into consideration in regard to the effective insolation of water is its chemical composition. It has been recently shown<sup>1</sup> that the action of sunshine in destroying germs in water is very considerably increased when common salt is added to the water, and this opens up a wide field for experimental inquiry before we can accept sunshine as a reliable agent in the purification of water.

Again, we must remember that a great deal depends upon the condition of the microbe itself. If it is present in the spore or

<sup>1</sup> Percy Frankland, *Our Secret Friends and Foes*, 2nd edit., p. 188.

hardy form, then considerably longer will be required for its annihilation. This fact has been abundantly shown in the case of anthrax, which in the condition of spores will retain its vitality in water flooded with sunshine for considerably upwards of a hundred hours, the bacilli being far more easily destroyed. We must also bear in mind that the individual vitality of the microbe is an important factor in determining its chance of survival; if it is in a healthy, vigorous condition it will resist the lethal action of sunshine for considerably longer than when its vitality has been already reduced by adverse surroundings.

It is, therefore, sufficiently obvious that the power of insolation to bacterially purify water is by no means easy of estimation, and that numerous and very varied factors have to be taken into account when we attempt to endow it with any measure of practical hygienic importance.

In connection with the vitality of anthrax germs in water, which has afforded material for so many laboratory investigations, it is of interest to consider what chance actually exists of anthrax being communicated by water. Until a couple of years ago, as far as I am aware, no instance had been recorded of anthrax having been communicated by water, until an outbreak of anthrax on a farm in the south of Russia was distinctly traced by a skilled bacteriologist to the use of water from a particular well, in the sediment of which the bacillus of anthrax was discovered.

The likelihood of such contamination taking place through the drainage of soil makes it of importance to ascertain what may become of the bacilli of anthrax derived from the bodies of animals which have died of this disease, and whose carcasses have been buried and not cremated.

The anthrax bacillus cannot produce the hardy spore form within the bodies of animals, but it does outside. Now Professor Percy Frankland showed, only a few months ago, that the bacilli of anthrax taken from the blood of an animal dead of anthrax are destroyed rapidly in ordinary river Thames water, but that if the temperature of the water to which they gain access is somewhat higher than usual, such bacilli are able to sporulate or produce spores in the water, and in that hardy form can retain their vitality and virulence for several months.

That anthrax bacilli can produce spores in water under certain conditions has not hitherto been dwelt upon in discussing the question of their vitality in water, and it is of obvious importance in connection with the action of sunshine on anthrax germs in

water, considering the different manner in which the spores and bacilli behave when submitted to insolation.

It was not, perhaps, unnatural that rash assumptions as to the efficacy of sunshine should have been readily accepted when such remarkable feats performed on microbes by sunshine were being continually put forward.

Amongst some of the most interesting of these achievements we must undoubtedly regard the diminution in the virulence or disease-producing power of such deadly microbes as those of cholera, anthrax, and tuberculosis, through simple exposure to the sun's rays. It seems almost inconceivable that by placing the cholera bacillus, for example, in the sunshine, its virulent character undergoes such a profound modification that it is actually reduced to the condition of a vaccine, and may be employed to protect animals from infection with its still virulent brethren. Yet this is what has been undoubtedly shown by Dr. Palermo in very carefully conducted investigations. He was, moreover, able to indicate, within a very narrow margin, the precise amount of insolation necessary to bring about this result, for if the cholera cultures were only exposed for three hours, their toxic properties were not reduced to the condition of vaccine, but if the insolation was continued for three and a half hours up to four and a half hours, they became endowed with the requisite immunising properties, and animals treated first with the so-called sunshine-cholera-vaccine were able subsequently to withstand otherwise fatal doses of virulent cholera cultures. Dr. Palermo also found that besides producing this subtle modification in the character of cholera bacilli, sunshine exerted a remarkable physiological change in these organisms, for when examined under the microscope they no longer exhibited their typical activity, having been deprived of all powers of movement, whilst those kept during the same length of time in the dark had not abated one jot of their accustomed motility.

But sunshine not only controls in this wonderful manner the action of the living bacillus, but it also operates upon the products elaborated by disease organisms. Thus the microbe producing lockjaw or tetanus may be grown in broth, and the latter may be subsequently passed through a porcelain or a Berkefeld filter, so that the resulting liquid is entirely deprived of all germ life. This tetanus-filtrate, as it is called, is endowed with very powerful toxic properties, and it will retain its lethal action even when kept for upwards of three hundred days, providing it is screened

from all light, but place such filtrates in diffused light and they lose their poisonous properties, requiring, however, upwards of ten weeks to become entirely harmless; if, on the other hand, they be exposed to sunshine, they are completely deprived of their toxic character in from fifteen to eighteen hours. Again, as little as five hours' sunshine is sufficient to greatly modify the toxic action of diphtheria cultures, whilst it has also been found that two weeks' insolation exercises a damaging effect on the poison of the rattlesnake.

Interesting as all these isolated observations are, they indicate what an immense amount yet remains to be done before we can hope to have any connected conception of the mechanism, so to speak, of insolation. At present there is too large an allowance, which we are compelled to make, for the unknown, to permit of our adequately manipulating this marvellous agency in relation to bacteriological problems. But who shall say what part has been, and is being still, played by sunshine in determining the individual character of microbes, operating as it has done from time immemorial upon countless generations of these minute germs of life?

The problem of insolation has, however, been quite recently attacked from an entirely novel point of view by Dr. Masella, who has endeavoured to find out whether sunshine plays any part in the predisposition of animal life to infection.

Now sunshine has long been credited with possessing therapeutic powers, and, indeed, traditions of cures effected by the ancients by means of insolation have been treasured up and handed down to the present day. Even as late as the beginning of the present century we may read of a French physician seriously recording his claim to have cured a dropsical patient within two weeks by placing him daily for several hours in the sunshine, and many medical journals of recent years contain communications on the beneficial results derived from the use of sunshine in the treatment of various diseases. It seems curious, therefore, that whilst so much has been done to test the action of light on disease microbes in *artificial* surroundings, such as are to be found in laboratory experiments, hardly any investigations have been made to try and define more precisely how sunshine may affect their pathogenic action within the animal system. Dr. Masella's researches, undertaken with the express object of, if possible, elucidating this question, are, therefore, of special interest and importance.

The first series of experiments was carried out to ascertain whether exposure to sunshine increases or reduces an animal's susceptibility to particular diseases, those selected for investigation being typhoid fever and cholera. For this purpose guinea-pigs were exposed to the full rays of the sun during a period of from nine to fifteen hours for two days, whilst other guinea-pigs, for the sake of comparison, were not permitted to have more light than that obtainable in a stable where only diffused light was admitted. Both these sets of animals were subsequently infected with virulent cultures of cholera and typhoid germs respectively, and were in neither case exposed to sunshine. The results which Dr. Masella obtained were remarkable, for he found that those animals which previous to infection had been placed in the sunshine died more rapidly than those which had been kept in the stable, and that the exposure to the sun's rays had so increased their susceptibility to these diseases that they succumbed to smaller doses, and doses moreover which did not prove fatal to the other guinea-pigs. Still more striking was the part played by insolation in the course of these diseases in animals exposed to sunshine *after* inoculation, for instead of dying in from fifteen to twenty-four hours they succumbed in from three to five hours.

Here, then, we find sunshine, in some mysterious manner not yet understood, far from benefiting the animal and assisting it in combating with these diseases, actually contributing to the lethal action of these bacteria. It has been asserted on the authority of some medical men that in cases of smallpox recovery is rendered more easy and rapid when light is excluded from the patient's room; whether Dr. Masella's experiments will permit of any such interpretation being placed upon them remains to be seen; they are, at any rate, extremely suggestive. He would, however, have us believe that his researches help to explain the greater and undoubted prevalence of typhoid fever and cholera in hot countries, where the sun shines longer and with greater power than we ever experience in these northern latitudes. Even the smoke-laden atmosphere of our great cities, our leaden skies and dreary fogs and mists, may after all then, if we can only learn to look at them from Dr. Masella's point of view, become a source of benefit and a subject for congratulation; yet our inherent love of light and sunshine would cause us willingly to hand over our murky climate had we but the chance of obtaining in exchange that of an Algiers or any of the sunny cities of the south! Moreover, in the case of tubercular disease experience is daily impressing upon us the

wisdom and indeed necessity of absorbing as much sunshine as possible, and hence the pilgrimage which is now recommended to Davos and other resorts where invalids can get the maximum amount of bright sunshine. And not only is this the outcome of practical experience, but De Renzi has shown by actual experiment that sunshine acts beneficially in cases of tuberculosis in animals. Thus, guinea-pigs were infected with tuberculous material and exposed in glass boxes to the sun for five or six hours daily, others being similarly infected but protected from sunshine. The animals which had received the sunshine died in 24, 39, 52, and 89 days respectively, whilst those which had not been sunned succumbed in from 20, 25, 26, and 41 days; or, in other words, De Renzi found that insolation had very materially increased the infected animals' power of coping with tuberculosis.

The part which sunshine plays, or may be made to play, in disease is very obscure, but it would appear at least justifiable to assume that it is an agent which further investigation may show we cannot afford to disregard.

We have learnt that sunshine is endowed with distinctly lethal action as regards particular bacteria, that it can modify the subtle properties of toxic solutions, and we are asked to believe that it may exercise an important influence on the animal system in determining the power of the latter to deal with the agents of disease; but, as we have seen, the mechanism of it all is shrouded in mystery, and we are at a loss to divine how it works. Might not some fresh light be thrown upon this problem if we could ascertain the effect of sunshine on some of these natural fluids of the body, which recent brilliant research has shown to be endowed with such wonderful protective or immunising properties? So far as I am aware, the action of sunshine on these anti-toxines or protective fluids has not yet been investigated. Can sunshine interfere with the therapeutic effect of diphtheria-serum, for example? If simple insolation can so profoundly modify the character of toxic fluids, it is not unreasonable to anticipate some action on these anti-toxines, and their study in this connection would appear to offer an important step in the direction of unravelling the mystery attending the action of light on life.

G. C. FRANKLAND.

## *At the Sign of the Ship.*

### A NEW HISTORY OF ENGLISH POETRY.

NOTHING makes a man feel so old as the succession of professors of poetry at Oxford. It is like the procession of the equinoxes, at which I have always had a great desire to assist. Each professor lasts and lectures for ten mortal years, in which, one might fancy, he exhausts what he has to say. Ten mortal years each professor endures, and I, in a sense, have seen five of them! I went up to Oxford just before Mr. Matthew Arnold vacated the chair, from which he delivered lectures actually readable in cold blood, 'which is strange.' I never heard him lecture, for he did so after luncheon, and Cowley Marsh, with its dead wickets, was more attractive. But the 'Lectures on Translating Homer' and those in which Mr. Arnold bantered his countrymen were, indeed, excellent reading when they came to be published. Would that we could say as much for all professors of poetry!

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Mr. Arnold vacated office, I think, in 1866 or 1867. Three candidates were then spoken of. There was Mr. Browning, who was probably ineligible by law, as no member of the University, and who, of course, would never utter a word in public. There was Mr. Swinburne, who had just published *Atalanta in Calydon* and *Poems and Ballads*. It was not likely that the worthy M.A.'s (most of them parsons) would choose Mr. Swinburne, even if they had heard of him: perhaps we should say, especially if they had heard of him. Then there was Principal Shairp, of St. Andrews, the best and most exemplary of men and gentlemen, but, as a poet, not uniformly inspired. As a lecturer, Mr. Shairp had often attempted the hard, the impossible, task of instructing in the Latin language the idle and careless youth of the Aula Sancti Leonardi—of St. Leonard's Hall. He was not a very

exciting lecturer on Virgil, or so I fancied in the arrogance of seventeen, and, therefore, if a vote had been mine in 1867 it would have been polled for Mr. Swinburne or Mr. William Morris, whose *Jason* appeared in those days. However, Mr. Shairp was elected, and being a true patriot, all for Bruce and Burns, Scott and Wallace, Hogg and Tearlach, and 'to h—— wi' the Whigs,' he probably told his southron audience a good deal about Caledonian minstrelsy. How well I remember the men 'chaffing' him in the theatre at Commemoration, and how good-humoured was his catching and returning of the ball of banter! To know Mr. Shairp was to love and esteem him. Probably no Scots song later than Burns' is so beautiful as his *Bush aboon Traquair*. But his devotion to his national poets might have had room and verge enough in a term of, say, five years. And that holds good of everybody, or almost everybody.

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In 1867 (I suppose) I made parodies, giving reasons for selecting each of the possible professors, or for their refusal to be selected, in imitations of their own styles. Mr. Swinburne, of course, was treated in the manner (as far as one could come within a million of miles of it) of *Dolores*. Having forgotten many useful things in the long years, I remember this nonsense.

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Oh, frantic and festive Dolores,  
 Shall I leave thee, ferocious and fair,  
 For the sterile old common room stories,  
 For the chapels, the chaff, and the chair;  
 For the dwellings of dons and of doctors;  
 For the maids of the *Turl* and the *High*;  
 For the wrath on the lips of the proctors!  
 Our Lady, not I!

They poisoned the flower of the Maytime,  
 They walked in the ways of the *Broad*;  
 The night was as light to them; daytime  
 Was dark where the feet of them trod;  
 They were prompt to pursue and discover,  
 Demanding one's 'college and name.'  
 Thou shalt keep me, thy languidest lover,  
 Our Lady of Shame!

'Broad' rhymes very well to 'trod' in my native language, and my kindest of friends and instructors in English had not yet cured me of saying 'brod.'

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Mr. Shairp was succeeded by the spirited poet of *The Red Thread of Honour*, Sir Francis Doyle; but, alas! professors cannot teach us to write like themselves. Mr. Palgrave followed, and it is to be hoped that the world may now have the opportunity of reading the lectures of this excellent critic, whose remarks on modern sculpture made mirth for Mr. Matthew Arnold. Yet I doubt whether Mr. Palgrave's censures were too strong. Mr. Arnold, assuredly, did not 'roll logs' for his friends, and how he came to refer to his successor in the chair as 'a Mr. Shairp' has been a puzzle. Why, they had been scholars of Balliol together, and Mr. Shairp describes Mr. Arnold as 'jaunty' in his poem on Balliol scholars. Probably the 'a Mr. Shairp' was a printer's error.

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Now the University, we hope, is to have Mr. Courthope as professor, and we may ask Mr. Courthope *why he has not written more poetry*. We do not usually 'ask for more' in the matter of song, but then we do not usually get anything so good as *The Paradise of Birds*.

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Mr. Courthope's *History of English Poetry* (Vol. I.) has now appeared.<sup>1</sup> An historian of English poetry ought, I think, to be a creature of impossible perfections. He ought to have the Celtic languages and poetry at his fingers' ends: not that we are Celts (we are only a little Celtic); not that Celtic is English, but because so many of our poets have been indebted to the Celt for subjects, and because there is something (though not so much, perhaps, as he supposed) in Mr. Matthew Arnold's remarks on the Celtic element in our national poetic genius. Then my historian must be a perfect scholar in the language of our Teutonic ancestors, from the English Conquest to Chaucer's time; skilled also in their measures, metres, and modes of thought; in their institutions and mythology. He must know the Norse languages and literature; he must be as deep in Old French as was Mr. Lowell or as is Mr. Saintsbury. He must be a Zimmer, a Rhys, a Gaston Paris, a Léon Gautier, a Bartsch, a Meyer! Latin, Greek, Italian, Spanish, must be, of course, his

<sup>1</sup> Macmillans.

familiar studies. Comparative anthropology and folklore are necessary to him (in the earliest and balladising periods), and, to be sure, he must have taste and exquisite original genius and a minute acquaintance with the English literature of the time before the Conquest, of the Middle Ages, and of the grim period between Chaucer and Surrey.

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As Rasselas remarked to his instructor, 'Enough! You have convinced me that no man can be a poet,' so I have convinced myself that no man can be an historian of English poetry. If, then, Mr. Courthope does not attain my ideal standard, no more does anyone else. I venture to offer a few strictures on his work rather as a folklorist than as a pundit in English literature. I cannot agree with Mr. Courthope that 'between the poetry produced in England before the Norman Conquest and the poetry of Chaucer there is absolutely no link of connection' (p. 4). There is, surely, the *catena* of language and the common basis (however modified) of national character. There is a vast difference in speech, disposition, ideas, technique, but there is no break—no gulf fixed. The change is the result of slow processes of evolution. Mr. Courthope, however, is better than his word. I can quite understand a man's saying, 'English literature begins with the first English books that every Englishman can easily understand,' and so starting not much earlier than Chaucer. 'The English nation,' he might say, 'is not the English nation *before* the complete blending of Norman with Anglo-Saxon, before Latin education, and European ideas, and French influence made us what we are.' A man might take this line, but Mr. Courthope is more generous, and he does give us a section on 'the poetry of the Anglo-Saxons.' Herein he talks about 'the Scôp,' the nobly-born minstrel in the 'Comitatus' of a prince or earl, and then he comes to *Beowulf*, 'an admirable example of the art of the scôpas' (p. 84). Let me confess that I am not quite content with Mr. Courthope on *Beowulf*. One remark of his, much censured by critics, obviously incurs their blame merely because it does not fully express his meaning. 'The interest attaching to *Beowulf* arises in part from its antiquity, but still more from the protracted dispute about the nature and origin of the composition between the critics of the school of Wolf and those who maintain the theory of a single authorship.' If this were true the interest of 'the works of *Beowulf*' (as the lady said) would be confined to

*goniobombyces*, as the poet in the Greek anthology calls them, i.e. scholars 'buzzing in a corner.' Of course, Mr. Courthope does not, and cannot, mean this. For example, he remarks on 'the admirably vivid descriptions of Teutonic manners' on 'passages that seem to breathe all that is most noble in the spirit of chivalry.' The censured expression clearly does not contain Mr. Courthope's full meaning. Still, one would prefer to find him praising the poem more freely for its poetic qualities. These, of course, are its real interest. Again, how *English* *Beowulf* is? Here is the passion of war and wandering of our aforetime conquering race, and here (in overabundance) is our didactic, moralising vein and our biblical taste. Here, already, is the origin of Havelock and Charles Gordon, of Cromwell and Richard Cameron, and of Nelson, too, as a reviewer says in the *Athenæum*. Once more the poem, as it stands, is, I venture to hold, no mere scôp's work. It is crammed full of Christian sermonising and clerical theories of the descent of marsh or sea fiends from Cain! The author of *Beowulf*, as we have it, was assuredly 'a Christian,' and probably 'an ecclesiastic,' as Mr. Thomas Arnold holds, not a heathen scôp at all. Mr. Courthope asks, 'In that case, how are we to account for the unmistakably heathen texture of the story?' (p. 88.) How is *he* going to account for the moral and pulpitering Christian 'application'? The *story* of *Beowulf* was 'all over the place.' You find it again in the Icelandic saga of *Grettir the Strong*. Our ancestors, in adopting Christianity, did not forget their heathen legends, any more than did Northmen or Germans, say in the *Volsunga Saga* and the very late *Nibelungenlied*. Any reader can see through the layer of Christian varnish in *Beowulf*, as anyone can see the heathen substratum of the much later *Nibelungenlied*, and, still more plainly, of the *Volsunga*. If 'minstrels' or 'scôpas' had preached as much as the author of *Beowulf* does, natural people would have hurled the feet of oxen and beef-bones at their heads. *Beowulf* is the work, probably, of an ecclesiastic, Christianising a Teutonic legend which he knew.

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I could wish that Mr. Courthope had himself translated his extracts from *Beowulf*, or had borrowed from Mr. William Morris's version. Mr. Thomas Arnold hardly conveys the right poetic impressions; still he does so better than Mr. Earle, with his Grendel, 'the bos of horrors'—*boss* 'is good'—and his 'saloons,' and his 'monumental cutlass.'

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One point in Mr. Courthope's treatment of *Beowulf*, and of ballad poetry, puzzles the reader. He says that 'nothing can be more careless and casual than the references to the heroic exploits, the family relationships, and the tribal feuds . . . ' in *Beowulf* (p. 89). 'This is just what might be expected in the style of oral minstrelsy; it is indeed an exact reproduction of the style of Homer.' I shall not ask, here, if Homer was an 'oral' minstrel, or whether he composed by aid of a syllabary or an alphabet. Madness lies that way. But is Homer 'careless and casual about the heroic exploits, the family relationships'? I had thought that, except perhaps for a difficulty as regards the generation in which Heracles flourished, Homer was particularly careful and accurate, in these very matters, though, when a god was in a family, Homer usually went back to him at once, by a kind of poetic foreshortening.

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The fame of Homer is dear to me, so I give an example of his genealogical accuracy. Neleus, father of Nestor, and the prophet Melampus were contemporaries. Nestor's son, Pisistratus, his youngest, was the contemporary of Telemachus; yet Telemachus was also of about the same standing as, or some years younger than, the *great grandson* of Melampus, the contemporary of Nestor's father. The genealogy runs thus:—



But this is quite correct, for Nestor was proverbially old, 'had seen two generations, and was reigning among the third.' No; I do not think that carelessness and casualness about genealogies is 'an exact reproduction of the style of Homer.' The Greeks did not think so either; for they always appealed to the two epics as their Domesday Book, which they sometimes accused each other of falsifying.

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If, then, *Beowulf* is 'careless and casual' about relationships, it is not, therefore, Homeric. Mr. Courthope says, on page 89, that *Beowulf* is very 'careless and casual,' careless and casual

'about the heroic exploits, family relationships, and tribal feuds of the persons and nations mentioned in the story.' Yet, on page 93, Mr. Courthope regards certain 'incidents recorded in *Beowulf*' as 'having a firm basis of fact.' Moreover, and more amazing, as 'family relationships' are treated carelessly and casually in *Beowulf*, 'the *Royal genealogies*, alike of the Danes and of the Geatas, as given in the poem, are no doubt faithful records of fact.' Manifestly Mr. Courthope by 'careless and casual' does not mean inaccurate, otherwise he contradicts himself. The exact sort of carelessness about personal relationships which is consistent with the faithful recording of genealogies needs illustration by examples. Mr. Courthope probably means that there is none of that prolix accuracy which fills the Icelandic sagas with genealogies, but his words are open to misconception. Mr. Courthope adds: 'As in Greek mythology the historic sense of the bard seems unable to extend itself through family records for more than two or three generations above the date' of the story in hand. As to the Greeks (if Homer is meant), Homer, where a god is concerned, uses a poetic foreshortening. Besides, it was not his business to go back to Deucalion and Pyrrha. He had not room or occasion so to do.

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Mr. Courthope is not yet through the marsh of genealogy. On p. 431 he remarks that, before the invention of writing, metrical composition alone 'can preserve the memory of things.' Precisely. And the Maori colleges of poets in New Zealand preserve, without writing, the memory of some things since the Maori Conquest—perhaps four centuries ago. They knew, *e.g.*, that at the Conquest certain sacred objects were buried under a certain tree. The tree was blown down in our time, and the roots, torn up in the fall, revealed the objects. Genealogies are thus, also, preserved in song, as by the old Highland Sennachies. 'The bard, or minstrel, is the genealogist . . . of the tribe,' says Mr. Courthope (p. 431). The author of *Beowulf*, in his opinion, was 'a minstrel' (p. 88), yet far from being, as he should have been, a 'genealogist.' The legend is 'of a genealogical character' (p. 279). The historic sense of the bard 'seems unable to extend itself . . . for more than two or three generations,' which any old man, let alone a scôp, could easily remember, if he was not idiotic! It was well worth while for a prince to keep a scôp, as family genealogist, when the scôp, like 'the oldest inhabitant,'

never remembered anything. The family scôp was about as useful as the family genius of Memnon in Voltaire. No Highland chief would have tolerated a sennachie so oblivious. However, though the minstrel never remembered anything beyond two or three generations, still, in *Beowulf* 'the Royal genealogies, as given in the poem, are, no doubt, faithful records of fact' (p. 93). Finally, when contrasting our ballads (much to their disadvantage) with the work of Scôpas (like the author of *Beowulf*), Mr. Courthope says that the scôp of *The Battle of Maldon* 'still sings as a genealogist and historian.' He, for one, is not 'careless and casual,' like the author of *Beowulf*, who was a scôp too. But the ballad-maker of the *Battle of Otterburn* (English version) is 'careless of historic truth' (p. 447); which, indeed, he *was*, because his side, as the Duke said of Blücher, 'got a d——d good licking,' and he could not bring himself to admit the facts as given in the probably modernised Scottish *Battle of Otterburn*. Moreover the author of the existing ballad lived long after date. Thus *Beowulf* and the *Death of Byrhtnoth*, compared with *Otterburn*, 'show how far the Muse of Minstrelsy has declined, with the Genius of Feudalism, from her old-world inspiration.' Now, *is Beowulf* a poem of 'Feudalism'?

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Without wishing to be captious, it is not easy to acquit Mr. Courthope of some mental confusion. Without affectation, I really fail to understand what meaning he intends to convey to his readers. If one might venture to suggest an explanation of passages which, very conceivably, seem obscure and self-contradictory, only to my personal dulness or ignorance, I would offer this hypothesis. Mr. Courthope has not (if I am right) clearly established in his own mind the distinctions between different species of early poetry, namely, the poem written by a spectator of or actor in events and the poem which repeats, in a later day, a confused echo of events. Thus he contrasts the historical accuracy of feudal poets (as I understand) in *Byrhtnoth* with the English ballad-maker's patriotic disregard of historical truth. Possibly he does not really mean that *Beowulf* and *Byrhtnoth* are inspired by 'the Genius of Feudalism,' or, again, I may be making a pedantic distinction between Feudalism and the 'Anglo-Saxon institutions' of *Beowulf*. Indeed, I confess that, here, the distinction is pedantic. In any case, *Byrhtnoth* is a poem of events composed by a spectator, or hearer, of them. *Beowulf* is a

late Christian echo of dateless legend. They thus differ in kind. Again, however we understand 'feudalism,' the *Chanson de Roland*, as we have it, is, in the strictest sense, a poem of feudal times. It should therefore, apparently (*ex hypothesi*), be marked by historical accuracy, in contrast with the inaccuracy of the English ballad of *Otterburn*. But I need not observe that the *Chanson de Roland* (that magnificent piece) has not one word to say for itself in regard to historical accuracy. In fact, Charlemagne's rearguard, returning from Spain, met with an Isandhlana at the hands of the Basque mountaineers in the pass of Roncesvaux. In the poem Roland is defeated—Roland, the conqueror of England—by Saracens and Ethiopians! Even the nefarious ballad of *Otterburn* can hardly exceed these inaccuracies.

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Mr. Courthope, then, it may appear, has failed to distinguish between two different kinds of early poetry. We have poems on events (such as the Battle of Maldon, where Byrhtnoth fell) which are *local and contemporary*. It is thus that Mr. Freeman describes the piece on the death of 'Brihtnoth,' as *he* calls the hero. He therefore accepts the facts and names, 'in the poem' as 'trustworthy.' The poem is contemporary evidence, it seems, written by one who knew the details, perhaps beheld, certainly heard on local testimony about, the struggle round the dead body of the English leader. That is one kind of old poem, and like it are the staves of Egil Skallagrimson, or, in fiction, 'The Song of the Sword of Allan.' But other early poems are not contemporary with the events which they pretend to record. Thus *Otterburn* was fought in 1388, and the ballads, as Mr. Courthope quotes Bishop Percy, could not mention the Earl of Huntley as a Scottish leader before the creation of the earldom, in 1449. Mr. Child also says that 'the ballad must have a date long subsequent to the battle, as the grammatical forms show'; but, he adds, 'it would be against the nature of things that there should not have been a ballad as early as 1400. The ballad we have is likely to have been modernised from such a predecessor.' If modernised it may also have been altered into conformity with the English desire to claim a victory where they really were beaten by a third of their numbers, as Froissart, a contemporary, proves. If we possessed the supposed ballad of the year 1400 we should probably find it not so glaringly mendacious. Thus we cannot say that the scôpas were more accurate than the ballad-makers, on

the strength of a comparison between *Byrhtnoth*, and the English *Otterburn*. *Byrhtnoth* is 'local and contemporary'; *Otterburn* is a late effort to conceal a defeat. The contemporary author of *Byrhtnoth* knows that his side was worsted, at Maldon, but the late Ely historian 'tries hard to represent the battle as a victory,' says Mr. Freeman, and so, with an unscrupulous reference to 'the cronykle' does the maker of *Otterburn*.

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Thus the disregard of truth in the ballads is not due, as Mr. Courthope holds, to 'the decline of the Muse of Minstrelsy with the Genius of Feudalism.' Obviously it is a question of the difference between contemporary testimony on one side and oral tradition on the other. Ballads, as a rule, reach us through oral tradition. They record, first, not events, but the popular impression produced by events—say by the death of Darnley, or a Court scandal, or a Border raid. Then reciters modify the poems, memories weaken, and so historical accuracy in a ballad would be extremely suspicious, as Mr. Child remarks. We have seen, too, that a poem composed by a great poet in the prime of feudalism, the *Chanson de Roland*, is wildly indifferent to historical truth. The reason is that the poem, written soon after the Norman Conquest (and can we reckon with it as 'early' the *Quatre Fils Aymon*?) deals with the popular impression produced by an event already some three hundred years old—an event which had long been the theme of *cantilenæ*, or popular ballads. The minstrel, therefore, had as much freedom as Homer enjoyed in treating of the Trojan wars. So, again, *Beowulf* deals with a dateless Teutonic legend, and localises it among remote historical associations; while the obviously Christian, and probably clerical, poet throws in his moral and theological remarks and 'improves the occasion.' While Mr. Courthope regards *Beowulf* as 'a sample of the minstrelsy prevailing among the Anglo-Saxons before their conversion to Christianity' (p. 90), he cannot be expected to see the difference between this remarkably didactic tract, *Beowulf*, and the lay of an early minstrel. Indeed, he admits that, though the poem is a sample of pre-Christian minstrelsy, the poet 'was a Christian,' though not an ecclesiastic (p. 90). Frankly, I can make no sense at all of this. To my mind a Christian, probably an ecclesiastic, is 'improving the occasion' in *Beowulf* with a heathen legend which had survived in England, or been borrowed from abroad, as it survives in the

post-Christian Icelandic *Grettis Saga*. How the poem of such a man can be called 'a sample of the minstrelsy prevailing among the Anglo-Saxons before their conversion to Christianity' it entirely defeats me to understand. One might just as well say that the *Iliad* is a 'sample of the minstrelsy' which Achilles sang in his tent. On me *Beowulf* produces much the same mixed effect as a version of Mr. Haggard's Zulu epic, *Nada the Lily*, might do, after a pious curate had adapted it for the use of Sunday schools! Such an adaptation would not be a 'sample' of pre-Christian Zulu narrative. Thus the composition of 'a single Christian poet,' probably in the ninth century, cannot conceivably be 'a sample of the minstrelsy prevailing among the Anglo-Saxons before their conversion to Christianity.' Probably centuries and all the social and intellectual changes of centuries stand between a heathen scôp and the author of *Beowulf*. Mr. Courthope says that 'the central conception shows every sign of having proceeded from the mind of a single poet,' who, 'it is evident, was a Christian,' and yet he maintains that the poem (of which the central conception comes from a Christian) is a sample of pre-Christian 'minstrelsy.' One is baffled by such combinations. The legend in *Beowulf*, the *donnée*, the most of the matter, is pre-Christian; the treatment is sometimes even painfully and tediously Christian and didactic. Therefore the pre-Christian minstrel deserves neither praise nor blame. He has been 'edited' by a Christian, poor fellow! And whether he is correct about genealogies or is poetically and casually careless we cannot regard him with any feeling harsher than compassion.

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Perhaps the most invidious thing I ever heard of in criticism was the complaint of a writer in a certain review that, in a work on Homer, I had not inserted a chapter on the *Chanson de Roland*. Well, I *had* inserted it; but the critic did not penetrate so far, and did not even read the list of contents. One is used to that sort of thing; and I, for one, do not blame Mr. Courthope for not furnishing a chapter on the sources of the Arthurian element in English poetry. To this vast and complex topic he gives little more than pp. 440-444. It is a free country, and an historian may still write his own book *à son devis*. But I do grumble that a reader who, like Miss Dartle, 'asks only for information,' does not get as much as he needs. Mr. Courthope says (p. 440) 'to assert that the Arthurian legend, in its existing

form, is, at least in outline, a relic of ancient mythology, is to advance a proposition which can hardly be sustained by argument.' To my mind there is plenty of Celtic mythology in the legend. 'No support to the theory is furnished by the Tales of the Mabinogion, of which there is no manuscript older than the fourteenth century, and which are more likely to be the offspring than the parents of the French Romances.' One could write a volume on these debatable texts, and on Mr. Courthope's assertion that 'it is unquestionable' that, 'in the literary composition of the fully developed Romances of the Round Table, the main factor is the invention of the Anglo-Norman *trouvère*.' The only authorities cited, on a topic which the modern Celtic scholars seem to be rapidly disentangling are those of Nash, Sir George Dasent, and Sir George Cox. Now the humblest amateur wants to know more, and might be advised to consult Rhys and Nutt, Gaston Paris, Birch-Hirschfeld, Loth, Skene, Gaidoz, and the rest. Nash, on these points, is nearly as antiquated as Bryant. See Mr. Nutt's *Studies of the Holy Grail*, p. 102. The topic is 'too ramified for me,' as a hero of Mr. Stevenson's says; but I know enough to want to know far more than Mr. Courthope tells me.

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Thus, as I said, the History of English Poetry cannot be written by any one man, however accomplished. We need Benedictines and centuries for the task. Once out in the daylight, Mr. Courthope will be an excellent historian; but among the darkling origins, *sub luce maligna*, he lacks the spiritual guide and the gift of the Golden Boughs.

ANDREW LANG.

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